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Monastic Seals of the XIIIth Century

Monastic Seals

of the XIIIth Century.

A SERIES OF EXAMPLES, ILLUSTRATING THE NATURE OF THEIR DESIGN AND ARTISTIC VALUE, SELECTED, INTRODUCED, AND DESCRIBED

BY

GALE PEDRICK

Fellow of the Royal Historical Society

London :
THE DE LA MORE PRESS
298 REGENT STREET, W
MCMII

PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF MEDIAEVAL STUDIES
59 QUEEN'S PARK CRESCENT
TORONTO—5, CANADA

OCT 6 1951
16337

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Preface.

IN selecting the seals which illustrate this work, whilst the reproduction of a number of the best remaining instances was provided for, I was not wholly influenced by the idea of presenting as many of the finest extant as was possible. That the group might have a value not restricted to the pictorial, I also aimed at affording through the plates as wide a view of seal design and execution, of the period limited, as was practicable. This explains the omission of a few artistic and well-preserved examples and accounts for the illustration of others of lesser value artistically, together with some which time has harshly dealt with. The difficulties attendant upon reproduction were numerous, and I am glad of this opportunity to acknowledge the successful manner in which these have been met by Mr. JAMES HYATT of the Rembrandt Studio, and the artistic fashion in which he has treated the seals. For the satisfactory way in which the casts were prepared, Mr. READY of the British Museum claims my thanks.

In importance and interest the histories of our dissolved monastic centres widely differ. That the designs appertain in many cases to the chief, and those which exhibit the most engrossing features is due to accident, not contrivance, all other aspects having been made subservient to the artistic. A work of this character, in so far as the historical matter is concerned, obviously, partakes largely of the nature of a compilation. Beyond the subject of seals I have conducted no independent research, but have drawn the necessary material from such literature as was available and useful. To enumerate all the works to which I have had recourse is not feasible, but I eagerly express and acknowledge the great obligations under which I rest to that monument of patience and scholarship, Dugdale's "*Monasticon Anglicanum*" (Edition of 1846), and the "*Catalogue of Seals in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, by Dr. W. DE GRAY BIRCH, F.S.A. The conception of the work, its plan and execution are, of course, peculiar to it.

GALE PEDRICK.

Teignmouth, February, 1902.

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Introduction.

I.

AT this period most of the channels of Art have been explored, their rise, ebb, and flow studied with sympathy and interest, as well as due tribute paid to their highest achievements. One course, however, affords a distinct exception—*videlicet*, the seal Art of the Middle Ages. The full-tide in which its progress culminated has occasionally incited adulatory remark, but the labour of its strivings, the throb of its aspirations have been almost entirely unheeded—that full acknowledgement its triumphs challenge wholly withheld. Partial explanation is not far to seek. Practically, and in this it differs from those of most Arts, the function which its productions were devised to exercise is no longer what once it was—a common necessity. Changes in custom and circumstance divested it of this and as a corollary time impeded its continuous development. Around an Art arrested in its advance by the obsoletism of its uses the veil of obscurity naturally gathered. A dead theme, like the buried dead, it lay forgotten. By later ages forgotten because, having no knowledge of it (its remains hidden away in repositories for the vestiges of the past) they could not remember. Notwithstanding, so pregnant is it with vehement beauty that its failure to obtain adequate appreciation and attract the attention of those who have sedulously prosecuted research through development to genesis in other Arts, provokes no mean surprise.

Inspired in the eleventh century, when the whole realm of Art was awakening from a sleep which almost approximated death, in the twelfth this particular tributary struggled for a purer articulation, in the thirteenth cast off the bonds with which crudity enfettered it, attained its loftiest, and in that and in the succeeding century produced, chiselled with exquisite spirit and delicacy some of the most consummate artistic efforts of mediæval times. Naturally, in view of the age, the Gothic spirit prepossessed it. As its evolution came abreast of that magnificent order

of stone distribution thus distinguished, which with the Crusades constituted the greatest idylls of the Middle Ages, it expanded under its graceful influence, and participated relatively in its ambition and glory. Its subsequent and comparative history yields a grievous contrast. Generally speaking the records of the various arts in conception, craft, style, expression, and all that makes and marks true Art shew, save for epochal depressions and retrogressions always remedied and counteracted, an evolutionary excellence with its final maintenance and future promise. Seal Art failing to recover from its first retrograde movement, marked as was the decline of Roman Art under the Emperors by an exuberance of tawdry ornament, pursued it to its nadir. Imbued with the soul which dominated architectural style, with the European spirit of the time, and advancing with it to manifest its essence it declined in sympathetic unison. When it came under the succeeding influence, the Renaissance—which affected contrarily the classic Art of gem engraving, —to emphasise the source which gave it life its state was wrought to a debasement far more ignoble than that in which the decline of the Gothic spirit reduced it. Bringing life to Art generally, to this branch the revival practically brought extinction.

All the best instances of seal Art which corresponded to the early English and decorated epochs, no matter what their class, contained much that was artistically commendable, but for delicacy of execution, beauty, variety of conception and magnificence, those ecclesiastical in character surpassed the rest. Compared with them lay seals lacked an almost indefinable element which characteristic differences in the designers, and the divergent usages for which their works were intended (the one religious, the other civil) can only explain. History and archæology unite in witnessing that in the monastic centres not only were the principal seats of learning located, but the chief springs of artistic taste and culture also. The religious formulas which prevailed and the devotions which obtained were in the highest degree artistic. By them Art, viewed from the most elevated standpoint, was inspired. Their mechanism demanded the loftiest possible expression of artistic feeling, and in designing and fashioning altar-pieces, shrines, chests, tapestry, gospels, psalters, mass and office books, vestments, and other ecclesiastical machinery with a skill which fluctuated but with an instinct conceived by Religion and born of Art, and a piety that was steadfast, in the lavish and splendid manipulation of metal, stone, other materials, and colour it was enunciated. When, later, these centres stood at bar whatever defects were discovered in their systems the neglect or discouragement of Art did not yield an instance. In view of the foregoing, ecclesiastical seals it is feasible to conjecture were, as a rule, monastic productions.

Ecclesiastical seal design may be broadly defined as an endeavour to convey through this medium the circumstances and ideal conceptions of mediæval Christianity. The effort, as its wide variation testifies, was a successful one. Superficially as much is obvious. But deeper study reveals a beauty more intense, the active exercise of great depth of thought, the working of rich imagination, and in the symbolism enlisted, full of hidden charm, the action of that faculty largely mediæval of seizing the incorporeal, and giving it substantial expression. The craft was heavily encompassed by restrictions. The space available was meagre, the surface of peculiar and inconvenient form—conditions which precluded room for that vigorous, untrammeled, and telling play afforded in the working of larger masses of metal and stone—whilst the difficulties of *intaglio* production are apparent. In its artificers were united skill, industry, patience, and artistic sense—at times high artistic capacity. Joined to these were humility and devotional ardour, for, similarly with contemporary artists whose work inclined towards the sacred, their central thought, their governing idea was to make Art not only the exponent, but the handmaid and confidant of Religion. It is the fruits of this which gave ecclesiastical seals their artistic pre-eminence. In face of the difficulties attendant upon their creation, to style the highest results as remarkable would be only to qualify them.

But the most significant feature, one hitherto entirely ignored, which demands particular consideration and appraisement in connection with seal Art consists in (if we may be allowed the term) its *premature excellence*. A comparative scanning of artistic development discloses that before painting, and Italian—as well, perhaps, English—sculpture achieved a state at all corresponding, religious seal Art had entered upon, if not attained its highest development. Surprising as this assertion, *prima facie*, appears at least one example has been preserved—how many of equal virtue are lost to us we cannot even surmise—to maintain it. Before the end of the thirteenth century Italian brushwork consistently bore an approximation to the Byzantine—characterized by severe lifelessness, the degradation of the human form (consequent upon the canons which condemned the study of the figure) to austere caricature, and the stiff and formal depiction of drapery. Beyond these conventions it had not yet traversed. The year A.D. 1240 witnessed the birth of a painter, whose genius the immortal Dante has extolled, destined to become renowned—Cimabue, the founder of a fresh school which Florence, Siena, and Pisa advanced. One picture of his, a Madonna and Child painted upon gilt wood, was hailed by the Florentines with great enthusiasm. Acclaimed a masterpiece yet this work revealed in its creator an ignorance of anatomy, and measured by later criteria teemed with imperfections. In the Virgin's

head descended the archaic type referred to. The nose was drawn long and thin, the mouth and chin in remarkable diminution, the hands and feet of both figures were absurdly elongated whilst the draping lacked ease and grace entirely. In Duccio di Buoninsegna, who laboured with equal aptitude and genius at Siena, Cimabue had a worthy contemporary. He selected the same popular theme for the central panel of his famed altar-piece in the Duomo, and in the work of the Sienese the faults of the Florentine are discovered. Their two productions, both artistically defective, mark the stage which painting had reached at the period indicated. Italian sculpture had advanced farther. Some thirty years before Cimabue saw the light there was born at Pisa, which lead in the reanimation of sculpture, a genius who prescribed the track it followed, and to whom is ascribed the subsequent excellence of European painting as well as sculpture—Niccola Pisano. Several of the panels of the pulpit, the work of his hands and intellect, in the baptistery of his native city are markedly faulty, certain of the figures exhibiting inaccuracies of drawing and decided want of proportion. How far painting and sculpture fell short of the standard attained by ecclesiastical seal Art, one attended with greater difficulties, the obverse of the seal of Merton Priory (a reproduction of an impression of which is illustrated—Plate I., Seal I.) eloquently shews. This seal, which was executed in silver *the year after Cimabue's birth*, also displayed the subject of his picture and the panel of Duccio, but with an absolute freedom from the blemishes of either —save in one respect. Neither did it share, with the same reservation, the noted defects of the sculpture described. The matrix of this seal has long been lost, or more probably destroyed for the sake of the metal of which it was composed, but the impression before us, which has survived the stress of six centuries, clearly reveals that the figures were modelled with a truth, spirit, skill, and beauty surpassed only in the rarest instances by brush or chisel. Artistically the virtues of the chief are very great ; the pose is both natural and dignified, the expression of the features benign and maternal, whilst the drapery falls without formal arrangement into the most delicate folds. In endeavouring to show the discrepancies existing between it and contemporary painting and sculpture we implied the existence of a fault. The impression reveals a slight disproportion and want of truth in the right arm, hand, and fingers of the Virgin, and in the right hand and fingers of the Child, and the question arises whether the artist completed the work he had begun, or from some circumstance or other was precluded from doing so. The presence of this defect is so inconsistent with the excellence of the rest of the work that it would be absurd to declare the artist responsible for its beautiful and skilful limning was incapable of

drawing a true hand and arm—his anatomical knowledge is evident, his capacity without question—or that he wilfully marred what was almost an ethereal creation. The only reasonable conclusion that we can reach is that the seal through a cause we cannot even surmise passed to a less skilful hand to finish. Happily its age admits of no question. Its reception into the Priory is recorded in its annals; a document is yet extant authenticated by it shortly after the date given as that of its creation; and moreover the architectural canopy erected above the figures tends by analogy to limit the period in which it could have been contrived. During Pisano's lifetime an architectural and sculptural creation of singular dignity, chastity, and beauty, which has evoked the admiration of Flaxman and all artists and critics independent of school, was raised in our own country, namely the west front of Wells Cathedral. This sculpturally-enriched facade finds no competitor in this, nor is it surpassed in any other kingdom. With those of Rheims, or Bourges it does not shrink from comparison. It was finished many years before the Cathedrals of Amiens and Orvieto—being generally ascribed to the episcopate of Joceline, A.D. 1206-42—and is esteemed the most premature instance of kindred sculpture in Western Europe. Assuming the accuracy of the period to which its construction is ascribed its sculptural excellence scarcely anticipated the perfected Art of the seal adduced. But a renowned architect assigns its erection to a time subsequent to the prelacy of Joceline, in the light of which determination the seal is of greater age. Here the point is of no particular moment. We measure the height of a development by its finest individual example, albeit the residue tarry far behind, and in either event it is infallibly demonstrable that many years before painting freed itself from the crudity and convention of tradition, and when sculpture had only begun to aspire to the flood-tide of its second life (not yet reached) ecclesiastical seal Art as regards its absolute purity had attained its zenith.

Since seals constituted the only means of authenticating documents, and were attached to those of trivial as well as of great importance, of all contemporary Arts that which involved their manufacture was perhaps the most fertile, and in its ramifications the most far-reaching. These conditions endued it with a considerable educational value. Necessarily the output was large, and from a single matrix were produced a multiplicity of impressions, each truly conveying the original design, disseminated amongst all grades of society. Thus must have been incited emotions dependent upon their artistic value. If the scheme was half-studied and unskilfully executed it must have offended the taste of the sensitive and created as a corollary a desire for higher things; if well designed and finished it contrarily gratified it, and stimulated artistic

perception. That the effect of the system was as described is a deduction too logical to be heedlessly brushed aside.

Apart from the artistic aspect, a study more engrossing than that afforded by mediæval seals it would be difficult to conceive. Nor is the virtue of the pursuit thus restricted. In them the varied threads of history and archæology with other lines are interwoven. The blend is a rich and valuable one. In assisting the historian in the construction and classification of fact they have proved most useful, whilst the irrefragable testimony they have contributed towards the establishment of theories, and the confirmation of ambiguous points have caused them to be recognized as one of the most important factors of archæology.

II.

The seal was not an invention of the Middle Ages. Its existence then implied a classic and historical usage. As abundant proof remains to show, its origin, coinciding to a large extent with the birth of civilization, is of the remotest antiquity. Civilization, *inter alia*, incited trade and commerce, formulated laws, enforced them and the fidelity of contract, recognized certain rights of property, involved the transfer of estate, the exchange of merchandise, and delegation of authority. Of even a limited system, as the first was of necessity, these were the early fruits. To assist in effecting and guaranteeing them some mechanism was simultaneously and urgently demanded. This need the seal was designed to and did satisfy: hence in common with most inventions it sprang from necessity. Its use was not restricted to any particular nation or nations. As soon as the elements of civilization aggregated, from the formation of the mighty kingdom of Babylonia onwards, its services were enlisted—at times it was independently devised—by all. Neither was the seal the exclusive possession of particular estates or dignities; answering a common need the practice it implicated always embraced all classes and so continued throughout the ages. In constant use, one of its chief requirements was that it should be made of some durable substance. Both stone and metal answered the stipulation and were almost invariably employed. To forward its purpose it was also vital that it should bear some device which implied its possessor, would distinguish and forbid estrangement from him. From this necessity, the circumstance that the medium chosen afforded a vehicle for artistic expression, and finally from that perception of the

beautiful always innate in man, the seal at its inception almost was brought into direct relation with Art the vicissitudes of which it reflected with extraordinary fidelity, and without the aid of exterior suggestion inspired, at epochs remote from each other, two distinct and superb branches, namely, the classic Art of gem engraving, and that of the Middle Ages primarily under notice.

The term "seal" in common language is employed in a dual sense. One distinguishes the die upon which the design is engraved, the other the wax, or yielding substance which receives the impression. Each exercised distinct functions, which varied with national custom and modified with time. Those of the first comprised, in addition to its main purpose, service as a personal badge, official ornament, talisman, or symbol of deputed force. The offices of the second embraced the preservation of the secrecy of written knowledge, the authentication of documents, the maintenance intact of goods and chattels, and amongst Eastern nations assisted in the incarceration of captives and prisoners. To ancient and modern writers and poets—from the scribes of Genesis to Swinburne—both seal and impression have contributed a rich and telling metaphor. To-day the first continues as a symbol of undisputed integrity.

From the earliest known period down to the fourth, or fifth century which succeeded the dawn of the Christian Era (when, as will be seen hereafter another description of seal interfered with its absolute use) engraved stones amongst all peoples almost invariably served as seals. At the first and for a very long time subsequent, whilst the development of the Art of stone engraving was visibly progressive, their designs were as a rule but mere incisions which largely partook of the grotesque. Other nations as civilization advanced commendably treated it, but it remained for ancient Greece, which carried Art to a degree of perfection unparalleled and unsurpassed when it attained that signal state of culture for which it was renowned, to raise the craft to the dignity of a perfected Art. That seals should share in the artistic fullness of the Greeks was but normal. At their hands it became a vehicle for the loftiest artistic expression. They produced a vast number designed and executed with superlative skill and beauty, the use of which long survived the Roman conquest, Roman dominance, and the Roman fall. Under Hellenic prepossession Roman workmanship reached a state of almost equal excellence. But to that influence it was not long sensitive. The swiftness with which Roman Art ascended found its contrary sin in the speed with which it sank. By the time Constantine assumed the purple its debasement was complete. In the descent the Art of gem engraving relapsed almost into its primitive barbarity, to slumber until the Renaissance. Assisted by stones of contemporary fashioning, antique gems supplied the

need for seals in Europe during the period indicated, and partially from thence until the time of Charlemagne.

As time expanded, states and nations arose, and peoples increased the practice we are heeding in all its primitive importance co-ordinately extended. To the comparative scarcity of classic gems were coupled, after the decline of the Art, the difficulties encountered in the contemporary manufacture of stone seals and hence arose the urgency of some auxiliary or alternative process. This was partially met for a while by the bulla, a disc of metal circular or oval in shape, struck like a coin or rudely cut (occasionally used in ancient Greece for securing the contents of wine amphoræ), which was usually attached to documents by cords or bands passed through holes in both. Originally and generally it was of lead. That its revival was the innovation of a date posterior to the disintegration of the Roman Empire allows of but slight question, but as to the precise period and whether due to Imperial, Papal, or Patriarchal forethought although archæology largely supports the second are doubtful points. Whatever the time or origin of its resuscitation the bulla at a very early period was employed as a second method of verification by Byzantine Emperors, Popes, and Eastern Patriarchs, and later by Frankish and other European monarchs. To the first three dignities it would appear it was at first limited, but gradually it lost all class distinction.

But that such an universal and continuously widening necessity as sealing undoubtedly was could always be satisfactorily met either by gems of antique manufacture (gradually becoming even rarer), stones contemporaneously worked (crude and infrequent as they were) or bullæ (which participated more in the character of coins than seals, each impression involving considerable labour and inconvenience), was altogether inconsistent. A mechanism having the fullest effect but capable of simple operation was yet requisite. This need the metal matrix was designed to supply. Its superiority and utility the uninterrupted usage from its introduction until the present, when only in corporate circumstances it is demanded, fully attests. After its introduction the bulla continued to be occasionally (as regards the Papacy entirely) employed, this, however, was but the result of idiosyncracy. For all purposes, practically, the metal matrix superseded it and the graven stone as well. The precise period of its invention and by whom devised are questions involved in obscurity, but (save, of course, as regards the bulla and the metal settings which commonly encircled the stone signets of the Frankish sovereigns) that metal as a medium for seals, although isolated examples earlier are not unknown, was not brought into a request in the least general until after the end of the Carlovingian race there cannot be much doubt. To the Capet Henry I., who ascended the throne of France A.D. 1033, the actual adoption was probably

due. He commenced the grand series of French royal seals in metal, and thus incited its application which from thence in a short time spread through Europe.

That the Anglo-Saxons had some acquaintance with the principle of sealing there is sufficient testimony to prove. The first known and undoubted instance of its exercise was an authentication of a charter granted to the Abbey of St. Denis, France, by Offa, King of the Mercians (A.D. 790), who sealed it with a stone signet, incised with a crowned profile bust. Other monarchs upon occasion used antique gems. Ethelwulf (A.D. 836-58) and Ethelred (A.D. 866-71) both did so. King Edgar (A.D. 960) employed for the purpose an antique with profile set similarly with those of the early French Kings. Coenwulf of Mercia (A.D. 796-819) issued leaden bullæ, which displayed the device borne upon his coinage, a small cross moline, as an existing specimen instructs us whilst another, and earlier Saxon use of this instrument by Archdeacon Boniface (supposed to have been a contemporary of the great St. Wilfrid (A.D. 709), who enacted such an important rôle at the synod of Whitby) is also afforded by a surviving example bearing his name and rank. Ethiluuald, Bishop of Dunwich (an extinct episcopate), who swayed the crozier A.D. 845-70, used a bronze matrix distinguished by an ornamental star of eight points alternately leaf-shaped and fleury, with his name and description. The monks of Bath, one which displayed the Abbey buildings, attributed to the time of the restoration in the tenth century; those of Durham another, sustaining a cross surmounted with a small saltire, assigned to the same period or the succeeding century; the Benedictines of Wilton Priory one, held to date from the tenth century, which exhibited the daughter of King Edgar, St. Eadgitha or Edith, blessing with one hand and supporting a book in the other. Ælfric, Earl of the Mercians, is known to have possessed a metal matrix (conjectured to have belonged to Leofric, Earl of Mercia, *circa* A.D. 985), designed with a curtailed figure having a fillet with pendent terminations, holding a sword erect, and wearing a cloak secured by a stud. But strange to say, notwithstanding that the instances enumerated seem to imply the existence of a usage, and do attest a cognizance of all three classes of seal defined the custom among the Anglo-Saxons, general as it was elsewhere, was neither prescriptive, frequent, or constitutionally essential. The cases cited, and others if they are to be discovered, are attributable to foreign influence, or were concessions to foreign custom. As a rule the Heptarchial rulers and ecclesiastics formally attested their documents, as illiterates do to this day, by the simple affixing of a cross a practice not wanting in religious significance, but altogether unsatisfactory and unreliable. It was nevertheless recognized and followed by all classes. It has been contended that the metal examples immediately

following the Conquest betray in their execution an Art though crude which had gone through some development. In point of fact these are of the very rudest.

That the practice of sealing, construed at its widest and in its general utility, was introduced into England from France a few years antecedent to the Norman invasion cannot be well disputed. An intimate connection between this country and Normandy (hence with France), consequent upon the exile of Ethelred the Redeless and his children, existed at the time Cnut ruled the land. By the death of Harthacnut, his son, the Danish house became extinct whereupon the Witan called upon Edward to reign. At the Court of his uncle Duke Richard, the Confessor had spent the whole of his youth. To all intents he was a Norman. After his accesssion he bestowed upon his foreign friends and ecclesiastics exalted offices and bishoprics, and introduced to his court Norman ideas, habits, and customs. Amongst the latter the practice of sealing—general in France from the rise of that kingdom onwards —was probably comprehended. The king, in emulation of Henry I. had a broad seal contrived for official use of metal, similar to that of the French monarch but varied of course in its conditions. To this circumstance, no doubt, the institution of the custom in England is primarily due. From thence it came to be recognized as a legal formality. Its growth was gradual. Although firmly rooted, to the closing years of the eleventh century it was far from commonly exercised. In the following it considerably expanded. At the beginning of the thirteenth it had become wholly established, not only as a national convention but as a legal necessity.

Since, as before stated, they afforded for a long while—execution by autograph was a much later innovation ; Richard II. was the first sovereign to confirm by signature, but long after he varied the fashion seals still retained their original value—the sole means of documentary authentication, during the Middle Ages the importance and utility of seals were singularly great. They not only supplied a necessary official mechanism, but in the conduct of the ordinary transactions of life encountered and satisfied, as they had done anciently, a common need. The use suffered no class or restriction whatsoever. Besides the monarch, officers of state, nobles, knights, ecclesiastics (both for functional and personal purposes) shared in it with the people and bodies corporate, civil and ecclesiastic. Some indication of its generality in the times of which we write is afforded by the large number of seal impressions of all kinds, and offices preserved. When we consider their friable nature in conjunction with their antiquity the insight becomes easily enlarged. The importance of the seal was superlative. Every precaution was necessary to frustrate any attempt

to illegitmately exercise it. Consequently it was guarded, and cherished with especial care, and often made to rely largely upon an intricate design. Official documents under seal were defined if closed as "letters secret," if open for exhibition "letters patent." Hence these legal phrases.

In Greece the usage, as we have noticed, inspired one of the richest of classic Arts which Rome for a while prolonged. For a while the perfect union of Art and necessity prevailed, but from the decline of the Art referred to an absolute divorce existed until the mediæval period had well advanced. Then the practice incited, as already hinted, another of considerable beauty and excellence, bearing an affinity to, yet widely diverse from the antique—the minute working of metal in *intaglio* which re-established the alliance for a considerable epoch. To our own country this quaint, mediæval craft was not peculiar. In France, Germany, and elsewhere matrices were fashioned with abundant skill and in commendable beauty. But England directed continental styles, and here during the finest period it attained both in design and execution the highest superiority. Viewed therefore from the loftiest artistic standard it may be well regarded as a national Art. To sculpture, obviously, it sustains a relationship not over remote. Nevertheless as a distinct Art it is entitled to, and occupies an independent position, and that one of considerable altitude. The former has been beautifully defined as the "Homer" of the Arts. With a reason of equal force we might well term this in question the "Chaucer" of them.

Having regard both to conception and craft, as we indicated at the commencement, although numerous civil examples might be adduced as capable exponents of the Art they involved, it was seals of an ecclesiastical character which reached the highest grade of perfection. And it is their artistic development only, as falling four-square with the lines of the present work, we are here concerned to relate. But we might permissibly conclude our remarks upon the former with a few observations in reference to the design and historical and archæological features of their remains. The seal of the Confessor bore obversely and reversely a crowned and enthroned figure with sceptre; that of William I. the same device obversely, reversely the king on horseback with lance and shield—themes which afforded the chief devices of the seals of English sovereigns thence unto the present. As the Art enunciated they became elaborated with subordinate ornament both devotional and graceful, to disappear as it declined. As if to distinguish the splendid hero of a splendid Agincourt the seal of Henry V. is unsurpassed for beauty amongst the royal series. Those of nobles, knights, and private persons to the close of the twelfth century were distinguished chiefly by representations of saints, other effigies, animals, birds, flowers, stars and crescents, ornamental generally,

unheraldic wholly, but often vested with a symbolic intent. In the next these designs were continued and augmented by rebuses (opportunities of conveying which the mediævalist rarely avoided), grotesques, and sacred themes. Merchants and artificers frequently exhibited badges implying the nature of their commerce, and implements their occupation. The introduction of Heraldry effected a considerable and important change. From thence it became the fashion to illustrate seals with armorial insignia. Those of the armigerous class alone were, of course, thus affected. The democracy continued the irregular and incoherent exhibition of original subjects although at times an armorial construction was aimed at. Seals of corporate towns were frequently topographical and pictorial, and conveyed representations, at times more graphic than faithful, at others accurate presentments of the localities to which they appertained—walls, castles, cathedrals, churches, gates, bridges, rivers, and other characteristics. This class of seal was not armorially influenced until about the latter half of the fourteenth century when the original device often passed into the region of heraldic illustration. Devotional subjects were not unknown, as the admirable seal of Carlisle, which displays the Madonna and Child, bears witness.

The royal series—violated with that of Charles I. to give place to those of the Commonwealth, Oliver and Richard Cromwell and resumed with the Second Charles—has been preserved entire. Historically it reveals the gradual political and territorial construction of the British Empire, and recalls the claim to France and its abandonment. Recounts the rise and fall of the houses of Normandy and Plantagenet, Lancaster and York, Tudor and Stuart, besides other national changes, conditions, and developments. Describes the incitement and expansion of the mediæval conception of Christianity, and the final abolition of saintly intercession together with the parallel growth of ecclesiastical influence, and its overthrow. Eloquently illustrates the rise of the Gothic perception, its apotheosis, decline, decay, and indicates the trend of the Rennaissance. Several examples of the Queen's consort have also been preserved. These include those of Maud of Scotland and Alice of Brabant, the Eleanors of Provence and Castile, Margaret and Isabella of France, Phillipa of Hainhault, the Anne's of Bohemia and Denmark, and Catherine of Braganza. Some supply the descents of the queens, and all contribute valuable data concerning styles of queenly costume and their chronology. National vicissitudes and political changes are also perpetuated in the remains of other state seals. The significance of those employed for " Lands beyond the Tweed," " for Calais," for royal absence (recalling wars with France), by the collector of the Tenth granted to Henry V., the Court of Augmentation of Crown Revenues (temp. Henry VIII.), the

Parliament of the Commonwealth, and of the Council appointed by it, need no elucidation. From other remains such as those of the Steward and Marshall, and Coroner of the King's household, and Lord Chamberlain, of the Courts of Exchequer, King's Bench, Common Pleas, Wards and Liveries, Justices in Eyre, and Cursitors of the Court of Chancery, for subsidies on cloth, and delivery of wool and hides, of the receipt of Exchequer, supervisor of Crown Lands, Port of London, Statute Staple of Westminster, customs, and from the seals *Pro recognitione debitorum*, and *Pro Debitis recuperandis* we obtain an insight of offices, and courts now obsolete, to the antiquity of such as survive, and to the judicial machinery, administration, finance, fashions, customs, and polity which obtained in the ages which contrived them. Such remains upon which armour is presented incidentally explain the conditions of mediæval warfare, and faithfully shew the progressive alterations which occurred in this method of military protection from the flat-ring, trellised, or mascled and chain mail to the innovation of plate armour. Similarly, alterations in the pattern of the shield may be traced. In some instances the seals of corporate towns furnish important evidence in regard to their early defences and buildings. But to summarize here all the historical interests and archæological values of civil seals is neither feasible nor consistent. Indubitably their chief importance is armorial, forasmuch as they contribute the most estimable and copious exposition of the science involved, and constitute the most reliable exponents of its principles. Upon them in fact its only authentic history is inscribed, and that with a completeness which leaves nothing to be desired, and with an accuracy which forbids question.

For increased security official seals were frequently composed of two parts, each with a distinctive device. A document authenticated by both, being doubly attested, was necessarily of greater reliability. When a seal was of one part only the officer's personal signet was occasionally used simultaneously thus forming an obverse and reverse, but this practice was not general. Seals were affixed in two ways. The most ancient method was to make a cruciform incision on the right hand side of the inscribed face of the document; the triangles thus arising were turned backwards, the molten wax inserted through the square orifice, flattened, and the die placed thereon, the tongues of parchment assisting to maintain the impression in place. This system was superseded in the twelfth century. From thence a slit was cut at the foot of the instrument, and a narrow strip of parchment or plaited silk passed through it; the ends gathered, the wax placed around them, and the matrix, or matrices impressed upon it. To guard against breakage they were frequently swathed in leaves, rushes, or twisted paper and in the case of large seals placed in boxes. A word as to the material employed for

taking impressions. In Egypt and other countries of classical antiquity clay was used, and in the Byzantine Empire as late as the eighth century an earth of some description. In France during Merovingian, and Carlovingian periods beeswax tinted yellow and red was employed. In England at first pure beeswax answered the demand. Later, whilst it continued to be used for state seals, and in some monastic instances, it was superseded by a composition in which wax only participated, coloured green and red. Sometimes impressions were made in the tinted composition and then embedded in masses of white ; so framed the seal had a very pleasing effect. The wax, or composition was softened over a chafing-brazier. Its preparation for use with the Great seal was entrusted to an important official, styled Clerk of the Chafe Wax.

The gravers of ecclesiastical seals we have conjectured were monks. It is more than passing strange that the designers of the lay have passed hence without leaving a suggestion as to their identity. Beyond evidence of their work, and that in abundance, we have no record of them. Yet in mediæval times they must have constituted as distinct a branch of the mechanical community as ever did the gem engravers in ancient Hellas. For the protection of their interests and the advancement of their craft, however, no guild as far as we can learn was ever instituted.

III.

In the century during which the practice their use involved first became recognized as a legal formality in England seals were applied to ecclesiastical service. As much is incontrovertibly testified by the archi-episcopal, and prelatial remains of those employed by Anselm of Canterbury, Gundulph of Rochester, William de S. Carilepho and Ralph Flambard of Durham, and the capitular vestiges of those of Canterbury, Winchester, Norwich, Worcester, and Exeter. Its growth, too, amplified equally. In time it attained such dimensions that there was scarce an officer of the Church, nor an ecclesiastical office which did not adopt it as essential to the government of the Church in the transaction of its politic, and domestic affairs, which for five centuries from its innovation, it is superfluous to point out, were only second to those of the state, and did not always preserve that relation. For primatial purposes it was exercised by Archbishops, and provisionally when their sees became vacant, by the Prerogative Courts, Chancery-, Commissary-, and Vicar-generals, and in the premier province by the Court of Arches. At Durham by the

powerful Bishop Princes-Palatine. For diocesan functions by Bishops and their Generals, Chancellors, and Treasurers, and additionally for their Exchequers and for the purpose of sequestration. By Chapters and their Chamberlains, by the Consistorial Courts, as well as by Deans, Sub-deans, Archdeacons, Rural Deans, Prebendaries, Surrogates, Succentors, and Vicars choral.

In A.D. 1307 King Edward I. decreed that all conventual establishments should employ a common seal, and that instruments issued by them not thus authenticated should be void. Long before this, however, the majority of monastic houses were so equipped. That as early as the eleventh century the system had been adopted by these centres fragments of the seals of the abbeys of York, Chertsey, Canterbury, Sherborne, Athelney, Tavistock, Hartland, Bardney, and Abingdon, and the priories of Twynham, Southwark, Wallingford, Eye, and Sele remain to attest. Reference, it will be recalled, has been made to certain examples monastic in character of the tenth century, but these were isolated exceptions called to prove a rule of comparative non-usage in Anglo-Saxon times. All the instances here mentioned are ascribed to the years which immediately followed the Norman conquest. It must not, however, be inferred from their recital that monastic use of the seal within the period defined was so limited, but on the other hand a deep-rooted and gradually expanding custom. Generally speaking, since the wax of which the remains adduced was softened to receive the impressions—when the Conqueror and Rufus handled the destinies of state—nine hundred years almost have passed. In face of this and other circumstances, it is remarkable that any examples at all of so distant an epoch should be preserved. So that whilst the list given enumerates about all the surviving monastic vestiges of the eleventh century it is most reasonable to conjecture that seals were employed simultaneously by other conventual establishments, of which we have neither trace nor record. Similarly may be deduced from the increased volume of remains, wide in their distribution, conventual use had greatly extended in the succeeding century. From evidence of the same character it is clear that in the thirteenth it practically prevailed. Obviously, therefore, the edict of Edward I., which expressed the necessity of the law, created no fresh ordinance but implied an established custom, being provoked most probably by its evasion on the part of certain foundations. Monastic, apart from secular ecclesiastical usage, was as extensive. Chapter Generals, Provincials, and Ministers of the Benedictines, Augustinians, Dominicans, Carmelites, Franciscans, and Trinitarians found in seals an equal necessity in the government of their houses. For the proper conduct of their internal concerns, temporal and spiritual, they were also used by Abbots and Priors, Abbesses and Prioresses, Chapters, Treasurers, Receivers, Sacristans, as well as by deputy and

subordinate officers. The corporate seal was sometimes fashioned of two pieces, but generally of one. For documents of reduced importance, a secondary seal termed the *Ad causas* was employed instead of the chief.

Almost every known description of metal was requisitioned in the manufacture of seals—gold, silver, bronze, etc., but the chief medium, especially in the case of large seals, although they were not uncommonly of silver, was an alloy which corresponded to brass. But rarely, jet, ivory, and bone with other substances were adopted. The process of cutting or engraving was effected wholly by hand, sharp small gravers being the sole implements used. In later times the characters of the legend may have been inserted by the aid of punches, but generally the description, always the design was engraved by hand alone.

At the birth of all the Arts the spirit perforce had to contend with the inability of the artist to give it adequate expression, and consequently suffered through the inevitable rudeness of articulation. As time advances we find the struggle between soul and crudity continuing to wage. In the contest the uncouth gradually weakens. Eventually the cunning and skill of the craftsman triumphs; the spirit bursts its chains, and soars in the perfection of expression. Neither the artistic instinct nor genius of the Pisano's, Fra Angelico, or Raphael were spontaneously created in either. They but marked the attainment of a higher stage in the standard of Art. Unavoidably to the rule defined ecclesiastical seal Art responded, but, as we have marked already, to that gorgeous and beautiful perception, the Gothic, it is primarily indebted for deliverance from its initial strivings and the fullness of its subsequent life.

The quality of a particular result depended, it is patent, upon the individual artificer—upon his skill, or lack of it, and the measure of the artistic capacity of his temperament. Such factors naturally produced good work in comparatively early periods, inferior—for it must not be overlooked that a large number of ecclesiastical seals were of debased style and execution—after the high-water mark of excellence had been reached. Nevertheless it is not difficult to trace, step by step, definitive and epochal developments of the Art under notice. During the century in which it originated (eleventh) in pretension it was lowly, in effect harsh and unstudied. Imagination was scarcely drawn upon, and obvious laws escaped recognition. The seal artist laboured, as others travailed then and for a considerable period thence, under a woeful ignorance of anatomy. Altogether, its results marked the scarcely intelligible utterance of artistic infancy, nevertheless they pledged a later coherency, for already design, very limited in subject and most grotesque, did not entirely lack virtue. If we consider analogously the abject state of all the other Arts, except architecture, at this period the development of the next century was,

comparatively speaking, remarkable. Although the ludicrous had not wholly departed it had become manifest that the engraver wielded his tools with greater freedom, confidence, and aptitude. Ratio and perspective claimed from him more consideration; the nature of his physical knowledge had deepened; his artistic perception and imaginative faculties were aroused—the great possibilities of the Art were dawning upon a mediæval mind ever receptive of artistic ideas. These possibilities the thirteenth century proved. In the highest examples the laws of proportion, anatomy, posture, and perspective were well regarded. The mediæval imagination ruled as untrammeled as the exigencies of the Art allowed. From the rude beginnings we have noticed it attained its loftiest, and anticipated, as we have endeavoured to demonstrate, a corresponding perfection in Italian painting and sculpture—and, may be, English sculpture also. Most noteworthy of all, perhaps, was the rapid improvement evidenced in anatomy, facial expression, and the draping of costume. In the fourteenth century the grace, delicacy, and excellence of the Art were sustained, and in the matter of ornament a greater richness achieved. And similarly in the early part of the fifteenth century, but in the latter it began to reveal, beneath a somewhat excited embellishment, a decadence. The Gothic spirit which had inspired and nourished it was on the wane. The sixteenth century reached, and it came under the potent spell of the Renaissance, which proved, as already noted, in this instance an eclipse. Thus obscured, its condition subsequently became as melancholy as gem engraving after the fall of the Empire. Art and necessity were once more estranged. To realize how complete was the disassociation, we have only to compare with the finest monastic examples some of the capitular abominations of Henry VIII.'s foundations, Happily the scope of this work does not demand the pursuit of its descent through the sixteenth, and succeeding centuries. The destruction of monastic houses destroyed, of course, the growth of the conventual the most interesting class of seal. The "Great Surrender," when many of the houses were relinquished to the King under them, was the last occasion on which they were employed, save in a few instances where adapted to suit other conditions. Upon some, obviously, as much pains were lavished as ever sculptor or engraver of Greece or Rome, or sculptor or painter of later Italy expended upon their masterpieces. Of the angelical painter, Fra Giovanni da Fiesole, a monk simple of habit, spiritual in thought, in whose work (distinguished by the expression of every shade of devotional feeling in the countenances of his figures) more than in that of any of his predecessors the beauty of the artist's soul was reflected, it is related that he never took up his brush without prayer, or painted a Crucifixion without weeping. That some monastic

seal examples caught and reflected the devout disposition of their artists is apparent.

Reflecting the principles, circumstances, and conditions of Christianity mediævally apprehended, the domain of ecclesiastical seal design, as we have stated, was of some comprehensiveness. The rule almost invariably pursued was, that in the case of official seals the scheme should bear some affinity with the office, in corporate cases some relation to the body to which it appertained. Throughout, the representation of such saints who were regarded as the especial patrons of particular Cathedrals, Abbey Churches, monastic establishments, and dignitaries enjoyed an especial prominence. Where they occurred a particular effort was made to convey some incident, legendary or otherwise, in the life, or trait in the character of the saint involved. The artist in this was greatly enabled by that beautiful system of symbolism which assigns to each a distinctive attribute or emblem, and the presence of which—in conjunction, if needed, with local conditions—renders identification somewhat easy.

At the beginning, as might have been anticipated, and as we have already hinted, the range of design was narrowly limited. Episcopal, abbatial, and seals of corresponding character merely displayed upon a plain field the figure of an ecclesiastic, vested with equivalent dignity, who raised his right hand in benediction, and grasped a crozier or staff with the left—a scheme which constituted their chief decoration until the latter end of the fourteenth century. Monastic illustration of the eleventh probably answered to this broad classification :—(1) entire portrayals of the tutelary saint similar to the figures upon episcopal seals (exemplified by the seal of Eye Priory), or (2), in imitation of the regal style, depicted enthroned (by that of Bardney Abbey) ; (3) elevations of churches, and monastic buildings viewed from various aspects, and shewing porches, windows, towers, and turrets (instanced by that of Abbotsbury Abbey), and (4), kindred elevations, augmented by the half-length figure of the patron located on or above the roof (like those of Norwich and Winchester). During this epoch, and thence throughout a common device was an outstretched arm which issued from the side, and grasped a staff, cross, or crozier. Originally, ornament construed in a mere decorative sense there was none, but as the century closed its birth was attested by the addition of stars, crosses, crescents, groups of tiny dots, and, where the Blessed Virgin appeared, by the lily, chastity's emblem. The character, and office of Mary the Virgin afforded the mediæval artist, if we judge from the point of Art alone, one of the happiest of themes, one he ever delighted to treat. In the realm of seal design, sometimes alone but more frequently in conjunction with the Holy Child, the Blessed Virgin occupied by far the highest position, in various conceptions such

as maiden, nursing mother, *Regina Cœli*, *Auxilium Christianorum*, *Stella Matutina* and *Consolatrix afflictorum*. The devout of the time plumbed the very fount of poetry to find her exquisite titles ; similarly, the contemporary seal artist sounded the well of artistic feeling in delineating her and the Child. Beautiful actions and postures resulted. The Infant variously stands upon her knees, nestles in her arms, seeks nourishment at her breast, holds her hand, grasps her head-dress child-like, toys with her hair, engages her in play, whispers to her, or stretches out Its tiny Hands in wistful entreaty. The Virgin and Child first occur upon the seals of Worcester Cathedral, and St. Mary's Abbey, York.

From the restrictions of the foregoing, in the twelfth century design escaped and enjoyed in that and the following an expansion which, beyond a mere indication of the lines it pursued, rejects adequate description here. Moreover, whilst subject, like music, had perforce to acknowledge the limitations of an octave, the harmonies of disposition were as variable. All the original types were repeated. They suggested, indeed, the broad paths design was in general to follow, and from them it generated. In the representation of ecclesiastical buildings both a greater accuracy and fulness of detail were evinced. And now the figure of the patron saint was often located within the central porch, and the idea was happy since it implied an invitation to enter. The number of saints portrayed with their emblems was occasionally doubled, even trebled, and from this period henceforward (to signify his humility, and explain the relation subsisting between the two) the insertion of an ecclesiastical, or monastic figure (within an archway beneath), supplicating the patron began to be general—an interesting illustration (although not exactly typical because here the subordinate figure is that of a saint) is afforded by the seal of Pershore Abbey, which displayed the Virgin and Child enthroned between SS. Peter and Paul, above a trefoiling containing St. Eadburga with chalice and book. Vestment and costume were sketched with more detail and greater richness. The platforms upon which the figures stood, often formed of little Norman arcades, were designed more ornately. Detail, both ornamental and symbolic, was contributed by stars and crescents, miniature churches, saintly emblems, and panels, varied in form, containing heads of monks and saints. In isolated delineations of Christ, He was presented, it may be taken as a rule, seated upon a rainbow with the Hands raised to bless. The Blessed Virgin is observed alone, a circumstance which does not lack significance, upon the Priory seal of Yeddingham, where she stands with a lily in one hand, the gospels in the other, and also upon those of the Cluniac Abbey of Northampton, the priories of Swinhey and Wayburn and the nunnery of Chateris. As distinct devices emblematic figures, such as the *Agnus Dei* with

long cross and banner flag, Dove with extended wings, and the Eagle of S. John the Evangelist rising with an inscribed scroll in its beak, were introduced, chiefly to distinguish seals of minor importance. Angels, too, gracefully postured, censing or supporting, were at times made attendant. Besides the types and styles outlined some variety of sacred and devotional pictures were admitted within this period—The Virgin, or an ecclesiastic reading at a lectern, the Annunciation, saints and others solemnizing Mass, Noah's Ark (vested with metaphoric value), priests hearing confession or kneeling before the Virgin and other Saints, and the Holy Trinity, symbolically conveyed, are themes met with. The brutal murder of Archbishop á Becket upon the consecrated stones of his Cathedral by the minions of Henry II. yielded the artist a popular subject. From the very beginning, as we have seen, architecture formed an important constituent of design, and as we have indicated subsequently influenced it materially. Its original introduction is obviously accounted for ; its effect, the crude representation of sacred elevations. Towards the close of the century under notice the ecclesiastical seal artist began the erection of canopies over the figures he was portraying. The architectural style which prevailed in Europe during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries is distinguished as Gothic. After the fire of A.D. 1174 William of Sens commenced the rebuilding of Canterbury Cathedral in the light of it, and approximately from thence-forward Gothic architectural ornament, essentially beautiful in itself, and lending itself readily and appropriately for the purpose, became a permanent (that is until the Art declined), and assuredly one of the most exquisite features. How the artist was lead to invoke it is easily deduced. Shortly after the introduction of elevations, in some cases they were removed higher up the field to admit of a saintly figure being inserted—the erection of canopies was a development of that idea. So much is clear from early examples, which invariably show them as structures resembling churches.

In the next century, when all the elements of design were treated with greater elaboration, and design itself partook more of the graphic, canopies gradually became enriched with elegant and minute tracery, designed at times with much gorgeousness and beauty. Often they formed arcades of numerous divisions of one, two, and even three tiers. The statuettes which they contained were deeply sunk (yielding in consequence relief impressions of admirable depth), and presented in graceful and characteristic draperies. They expressed different tones of religious feeling, and exhibited every variety of devotional disposition. What some of the most artistic seals resembled were miniatures of magnificent altar-pieces. Occasionally a fine and beautiful effect was ingeniously obtained (see Boxgrave and

Southwick Priories, Plates IV. and XXXVIII.). Instead of a single, or double piece the seal was composed of several. Two displayed the figures only, the remainder supplied the tracery ; impressions were obtained from each, and built up when the statuettes were revealed through the perforated architectural work To Bishoprics, Abbeys, and other conventual institutions at an early time in the history of Heraldry, armorial insignia were assigned, and in this century the heraldic shield, thenceforward an important and general feature, was introduced. All available space was now utilized in the addition of detail, ornamental, symbolic, or appropriate, and beauty considerably advanced by the adoption of diapering, a surface decoration largely employed in stained glass and sculpture. The scope of sacred subjects greatly extended. In addition to those enumerated as obtaining in the twelfth century, the Nativity, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, her Coronation, the *Noli me tangere*, Crucifixion, Resurrection, St. Martin dividing his cloak, the martyrdoms of SS. Alban and Edmund with various other religious conceptions appeared.

The design, as a rule, was enclosed by a legend which denoted the name, dignity, and title of the ecclesiastic or monastic corporation employing the seal. In addition, often in metre, mottoes of a sacred character, pious ejaculations, petitions to saints, confessions of faith, and benedictions occasionally accompanied it, or were so cut in the matrices of dual seals that when an impression was made it appeared on the rim. The lettering was frequently of great beauty. In style the characters fall chronologically into four classes, *videlicet* Roman, Rude Lombardic, Good Lombardic, and Black Letter.

IV.

In the first part of this Introduction we mentioned in general terms that seals were endued with much historical and archæological value. The qualities of the civil class we have, in both respects, briefly demonstrated. Upon their artistic merits the worth of those monastic in character do not merely rest. They, in common with others, contribute facts of peculiar importance, and reflect and perpetuate old-time circumstances, conditions, and sympathies.

Artistically speaking, their value is not alone intrinsic, but extrinsic since they exhibit with some completeness and in all fidelity the artistic spirit of the ages in which they were contrived, assist in unveiling its nature, and register its pulsations.

Their second appraisement is perhaps architectural. Valuable indications of the style and form of religious buildings, either eternally effaced or long superseded by others of greater magnificence and dimensions, are afforded by such of the early corporate examples as exhibit structural elevations. Those executed within the Gothic era, illustrate with truth and fullness the development of architecture so discriminated, and reveal with equal clearness all that that beautiful style, enunciated with few exceptions by the grandest Churches of Europe standing to-day, signified and conveyed. They fall naturally into the three classes into which Gothic in England is divided :—Early English, Decorated, and Perpendicular, roundly corresponding to the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. From their designs so minutely and skilfully drawn, its rise, ascendency, and decadence might be almost independently traced.

Seal heraldry is well esteemed a beautiful exponent of English history. Conventual seal heraldry in particular may not be so highly considered. It can scarcely be said to yield assistance in the science of family genealogy, yet as an aid in pursuing and illustrating that of certain of our destroyed monastic centres it is not to be despised. Moreover the personal, doctrinal, and historical associations which gather around it renders this aspect of the subject highly interesting.

By reference to these seals questions which involve ecclesiastical, ritual, ornament, vestments, and insignia distinguishing the various dignities within the bosom of the Church (the figures being characteristically apparelled and distinctly marked) may often be determined. The evolution of the mitre, from a low cap to the high-peaked construction with which we are familiar is shewn with peculiar lucidity.

A certain biographical interest they do not lack. By them names which imply characters as versatile as humanity itself—magnificent and mean, simple and subtle, proud and humble, powerful and weak (not infrequently finding their weakness in the very greatness of their strength), worldy and devout, sensual and austere—of Abbots, Priors, and others are preserved.

As topography loudly attests, cities, towns, and villages in many instances originated in monastic houses. Architectural vestiges of such are now deplorably scant, and this parentage seals assist local nomenclature, ever subject to vicissitude and corruption, in transmitting.

The relation of the objects under notice to the nation's history does not elude definition. With the eleventh century, during the last decade of which the first Crusade was entered upon, a period of great religious enthusiasm began in England. When we study the life of our ancestors, their habits and their times, no feature do we find more clearly defined than the intense religious spirit with which they were imbued, and

the active form in which it found expression. It stands out as the Himalaya of the view. Their age was that of faith—of blind faith if you will—and ardent devotion. Their God was not the doubtful product of some abstruse system of philosophy, nor a theoretic Being accepted by the spiritual side of thought and rejected by the scientific. There was an entire and magnificent absence of reasoning in the minds of the people. He was a Supreme Being whose existence, or Almighty potentialities were never even so much as questioned. As He was revealed to them, so was He accepted—a God of Love, and to be loved, ever ready to succour and assist, yet, withal, to be feared with a mighty dread, to be conciliated, adored, at all times in every moral circumstance to be invoked, and always to be considered in human calculation. To this faith and ardour and fear most of the innumerable sanctuaries with which the land is jewelled stand to-day as silent and incontrovertible witnesses, and upon it these seals shed one of their many vivid lights.

Besides the Supreme Being, there reigned in the hearts of the people, though in a lesser degree, another being, conceded a place in the heavens only subordinate to that of the Trinity—a being to be implored with a sense of her power, but never to be dreaded, a being primarily to be loved and revered, whose name "was lisped by little ones, and lingered on the lips of the aged and the dying"—Mary, the Mother of God. In religious seal design, as already stated, she occupied the dominant position. The vocal expression of the Art was in fact a hymn sung in her honour, an impassioned call to her aid. The extraordinary part she enacted in the "World's Tragedy," and the relation in which it necessarily placed her with the God-head and Son impelled towards her feelings of intense veneration. The suffering, pathos, and sorrow that rôle involved incited the compassion and attracted the love of the people—as *Mater Dolorosa* she was held to be in unison with the entire human race. Other saints there were to whom they inclined as design of this character (eloquent of the love and reverence experienced towards them) attests but none, if we exclude S. Peter, entered with a tithe of the fullness she did, into the common life. At least every sixth church in England was raised in her honour; the dedications of hundreds are indefinite, but it is safe to say a large proportion of these were also under her protection. To us who live in a material age this profound, yet limited surrender to the *Rosa mystica* lends some difficulty of comprehension perhaps. But it must be remembered, the mother, with all the qualities and powers with which the Church endowed her, was accepted as blindly as the Supreme Being. She was the *Mater Christi*, and the love she naturally bore Him was held to include mankind. Devotion to her was perhaps the strongest illumination of mediæval Christianity and religious seals reflect it more intensely than

any other surviving monuments. It is, indeed, the most potent of their lights.

From the earliest times, until the reign of Henry VIII., when it was sundered, the allegiance of England to Rome—fraught with importance immeasurable, seeing that it shaped the history and development of the country for a thousand years—is also loudly voiced. Up to the period marked, Archbishops were usually delineated vested with that insignia of obscure origin and vast significance—the pallium—the investiture with, and acceptance of which was a claim, and its acknowledgment that the powers of the Archbishops were held at the discretion of the Roman Pontiff, and that their spiritual jurisdiction was encompassed by that of the Pope. The allegiance is also indicated by the occurrence of the Papal Tiara, and emphasized by the frequence with which S. Peter appeared, not on account of his affecting personality, or out of sympathy with his intense humanity, but because in him, and in his successors was recognised the head of the Church upon earth. To him, from the motive explained, our ancestors constructed a devotion for which they became marked throughout Europe. No saint, save the Blessed Virgin entered with such penetration into their lives. The first great Abbatial Church of Canterbury, and the famed minsters of York and Westminster were all three dedicated to him as were for a considerable time all the Churches of Northumbria. Thirteen Cathedrals and Abbatial Churches raised in his honour sent lords to Parliament. About twenty Collegiate Churches, and over sixty conventual establishments in their titles paid him particular homage. By the sixteenth century the number of his Churches in England was considerably in excess of a thousand, the city of Lincoln alone possessing seven. The phases of popularity of other less significant dedications (notably that of S. Thomas of Canterbury) are similarly revealed, and simultaneously is illustrated the marked prevalence of the condemned dogma of saintly intercession.

To the system of monasticism, so marked a feature of mediæval life, to the establishments, wherein learning, culture, and art were encouraged and advanced, hospitality was daily dispensed, where the leper was fed, the ignorant taught, and the suffering alleviated, which it raised in endless profusion, and architectural magnificence all over the land—which in no inconsiderable degree affected its history, and evolution, and, inasmuch as their occupants often stood in the relation of judges, landlords, and spiritual counsellors towards our forefathers, fashioned largely the character of its people—the objects we are describing remain as telling memorials. The number preserved, with those of hospitals and purely charitable institutions is great, and bears some percentage to the multitude of religious foundations which were endowed by the beneficent. Collectively, therefore, they also constitute a cenotaph to the sterling

munificence of our ancestors, with which modern charity, speaking comparatively, may not compete.

One of the most charming features of design is the wealth of story, drawn from the rich springs of mediæval legend (which reveals a singular exquisiteness, and luxuriance of imagination, and in its poetic fullness and loveliness surpasses, upon a proper consideration, even classical mythology and the profane folklore of later nations) which, assisted by symbolism, it relates. A few instances here will serve to illustrate the auriferousness of this vein. The seal of Cathale Priory, which was dedicated to S. Giles, the patron of " the woodland, of lepers, beggars, cripples, and of those struck by some sudden misery and driven into solitude like the wounded hart, or hind " suggested the legend that the saint, having sought solitude in the depths of the forest, there lived in prayer and contemplation, his sole companion a hind who nourished him with her milk. One day when the air rang with the shouts of the chase an arrow was aimed at the hind. To save his pet S. Giles deliberately stretched out his hand, it is said, and received the bolt intended for her. Dover Priory (see Plate IX., Seal 17-18), enjoyed the patronage of S. Martin of Tours (whose feast—Martinmas —is still a great day in Scotland and the North of England), the disciple of S. Hilary of Poictiers. The seal employed by that institution recounted that one wintry day when the dread east wind scourged the hillside, the young soldier rode out and encountered a beggar. Moved with pity by his ragged garments which failed to protect he divided his cloak with him. That night the Saint saw in a vision Our Lord surrounded by angels, clothed in the identical half of the garment he had given away. Under the care of S. Margaret of Antioch—the feminine counterpart of our S. George, whose voice a thousand years after her martyrdom inspired La Pucelle to attempt the rescue of France, and devotion to whom was introduced into England from Syria in the eleventh century by the retiring Crusaders—Poughley Priory reposed. Its seal suggested that when S. Margaret was cast into prison on account of her faith she was assailed by the Prince of Darkness in the form of a terrible dragon breathing flame, and that by simply raising the Cross aloft she vanquished it—or the more popular version, that when thus attacked, she was devoured by the foe who immediately burst asunder, and vanished leaving the maiden, endued with a refulgent light, unharmed. The Gilbertines of Lincoln regarded S. Catherine of Egypt as their especial protector, and contrived that their seal should allude to her rescue. Oppressed by the tyrant Maximianus she was bound to a spiked wheel when fire rained down from Heaven, shattered the instrument of torture, and left her scathless. These are but glimpses of this aspect, alive with beauty, of our theme.

As before observed, an opportunity for a rebus seldom went unavailed of by mediævalists, a peculiarity accounted for by their passion for the symbolic. Instances are adduced in the seal of Ralph, who for a time held the Abbacy of Ramsey, which exhibited beneath an ornate scheme two *rams* in combat on an island in allusion to the site, and that of Oseney Abbey (see Plate XXV., Seal 49), which displayed *inter alia* an ox passant guardant in reference to the adjacent city of Oxford. Before the establishment of Heraldry as a permanent element of ornament, armorial allusions from a similar cause at times occurred. For example, the seal of the Austin Canons of Lesne bore in the field on each side a *luce* or pike hauriant palewise, derived from the arms of the founder Richard de Lucy.

Not only figures, but positions and shapes were anciently vested with peculiar symbolic intents. The spirit which ordained that the sanctuary of a Church should face the rising and the entrance the setting sun decreed that the configuration of ecclesiastical seals—a rule, as will be seen, very often honoured in the breach, as well as in the observance—should be emblematic of Him in whose service they were employed. The form is arrived at by the intersection of two segments of circles, called a pointed oval, or more properly a *vesica piscis*. The *vesica piscis*, says Pugin in his *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament*, "appears to be derived from a very common acrostich of Our Lord's Name and Offices, contained in the Greek word ICHTHYS, which signifies a fish. This word, Eusebius and S. Augustine inform us, was formed from the initial letters of some verses of the Erythræan sybil, which taken together made the Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ, which is interpreted Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱὸς Σωτήρ, that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour. In allusion to this most ancient emblem of Our Lord, Tertullian, and other early Fathers speak of Christians as Pisciculi, as born in the waters of Baptism. Hence it seems probable that the mode of representing Our Lord in a nimbus of a fish form originated. . . . The *vesica piscis* is found from the fourth century downwards." Of this form Laing, in his *Ancient Scottish Seals* speaks ingeniously thus :—"It may not unnaturally be supposed to represent the Church. For as the two circles, the intersection of which gives the figure, may symbolically represent the circles of time and eternity, so the figure given, may well represent the Church, where in a peculiar manner are united the affairs of time with the more important affairs of eternity ; or in other words, the Church in the faithful discharge of its duties, forms, as it were, a connecting link or introductory passage —a resting place where, though within the circle of time and still militant may yet be met and enjoyed in some slight degree the blessings of eternity."

For a glimpse of the religious and ecclesiastical aspect of mediæval life, and a clearer perception than is generally obtainable elsewhere of its nature, extent and effect there is no source more valuable than those remains of which we have here particularly treated. Upon the counterseal of Walter Mauclerk, Bishop of Carlisle, A.D. 1224-40, occurs a charming Latin verse. Since it poetically expresses the sum of what we have endeavoured to convey in the foregoing, a translation of part (*Arch. Jour.* No. 192, p. 344) will fitly serve as a conclusion,

Voiceless though this sculpture,
Still it utters sound.

Descriptive Notes.

N.B.—The Monastic Houses, seals of which are illustrated, are arranged alphabetically, and accompanying each description is the number of the Plate and Illustration which corresponds.

BARKING, Benedictine Abbey of SS. Mary and Ethelburga, co. Essex.

PLATE XVI.

SEAL 32.

ONE of the wealthier, more ancient, and more splendid establishments of its kind raised in this country. Illustrious for the sanctity and degree of several of its Abbesses, and as the scene of many miracles. Situated near the little river Rhoding, slightly beyond the Town which anciently derived much importance from it. Founded *c.* A.D. 670 during the reign of Hodilred King of the East Saxons (who granted a charter still preserved) by Erconwald, first Bishop of London after S. Augustine's arrival, who installed as Abbess his sister Ethelburga. She was followed by her sister Hildelha. Both were canonized; S. Ethelburga was buried here, and afterwards united with the B. Virgin in the patronage. Other Abbesses of the Saxon blood-royal were Oswyth, daughter of Edifrith, King of Northumbria; Edilburga, Queen of Ina of Wessex, and his sister Cuthebergh. The Abbey was destroyed by the Danes; some of the nuns were slain, others put to flight. It was restored by King Edgar, and presided over by Elfrida, his queen, after his death. Here the Conqueror resided, pending the erection of the Tower of London. For a while Matilda, queen of Hen. I., governed as did also Maud, the wife of King Stephen. Adeliza, her successor, erected as a cell a hospital at Ilford. Several privileges were conferred upon the Abbey by various sovereigns and by frequent grants its possessions were extended. Mary, the sister of S. Thomas â Becket, in A.D. 1173 became head of the house. Richard of Barking, Abbot

of Westminster, Counsellor of Hen. III., Chief Baron of the Exchequer, and Lord Treasurer of England was interred here, and here Edmund and Jasper Tudor, sons of Catherine, queen-dowager, and Owen Tudor were educated. Unhappily, the impression of the seal illustrated is imperfect and indistinct. The design conveyed the joint dedication, and commemorated the circumstances of the foundation. At the apex, within a cusping, appears the B. Virgin with the Infant Jesus, between SS. Peter and Paul delineated in part. A trio of cusped arches upheld by four pillars follow, the central occupied by S. Erconwald, with staff and book, the dexter and sinister by SS. Ethelburga and Hildelha. At the sides are two candlesticks with tall candles, introduced in a devotional sense, in the field a star and crescent, and in the base under a circular-headed archway the Abbess praying.

. . . . VA . . . RKING . . . . ŌVENT . . . . [P]ROTEGAT · IS[TVM.]

A complete estimate of the art of the seal is obviated by the state of the impression which nevertheless reveals in the design a harmonious arrangement, and suggests true and skilful drawing. An embattled gateway (the entrance to the Church-yard) over which is a chapel, and a few fragments of the walls are all that now remain of this once magnificent Abbey.

BATH, Benedictine Abbey of SS. Peter and Paul, co. Somerset.

PLATE XVII. Seal 34.

A Saxon foundation the fame, wealth, and pretension of which its magnificent church, "the Lantern of England," still reminds us. Erected in honour of the B. Virgin for nuns (*c.* A.D. 676), through the munificence of Osric, the King of the Hwiccias, who gave for the purpose the lands of a hundred tenants. Destroyed by the Danes, and restored (*c.* A.D. 775) by King Offa, who changed the dedication to S. Peter, and installed secular canons. Refounded by King Edgar (who was crowned by S. Dunstan within the church) for Benedictine monks. With the city, the Abbey church was burnt by Geoffrey, Bishop of Coutance and Robert de Mowbray during the insurrection of the first of William II. in favour of Robert the Conqueror's eldest son. John de Villula, Bishop of Wells, having acquired of Rufus a grant of the Abbey, together with the city and its privileges, and removed his seat hither, rebuilt (A.D. 1106) the church as a Cathedral upon a magnificent scale, endowed the Abbey with the city and other property, and reduced it to a priory, reserving its

patronage to the bishopric. At this time, other and considerable gifts were made. Bishop Robert (A.D. 1135-66) rebuilt the church, which with the city had been again destroyed by fire, upon a larger scale, and increased the endowment. Before he came to the throne, King John annexed two priories founded by him in Ireland. Bishop Savaric (A.D. 1192-1205) transferred the episcopal chair to Glastonbury Abbey, and assumed the title of Bath and Glastonbury, but afterwards Bishop Joceline released the latter Abbey and resumed the title since borne, of Bath and Wells. King John gave the monks (for a consideration) a farm, freed them from toll at Bristol, and conferred with those of execution and the fire and water ordeals, various privileges. Ed. I. granted two fairs. The seal presented is assigned to the end of the thirteenth century. After Bishop Robert rebuilt the church S. Paul was joined with S. Peter, and the dual dedication affords the subject. The design comprises, upon a field diapered lozengy—each space charged with a rose—the two Apostles standing upon a terrace, beneath a carved triple Gothic canopy, supporting a model of the Church, and at the base, within a trefoiled niche, three supplicating monks.

SIGIL[LV]M [: CAPIT]VL[I : BATHONIENSIS : ECCL]ESIE.

This fine example displays considerable beauty, and richness. The scheme is well studied, the figures are commendably treated, whilst the elaborate architectural detail, and the model Church reveal the work of a skilful hand. Highly artistic, and striking is the general effect. At the Dissolution the citizens declined the option of purchasing the Church, which was stripped of its glass, iron, and lead. Subsequently it was presented to the city. A cruciform structure, with a fine central tower, of considerable magnificence, it was commenced by Bishop Oliver King, who was translated from Exeter A.D. 1495, and until recent times was the last purely Gothic edifice of any magnitude reared in England. No remains of the domestic buildings exist.

BOXGRAVE, Benedictine Priory of SS. Mary and Blaise, co. Sussex.

PLATE IV.

SEAL 7.

A SMALL, originally wealthy foundation, erected as a cell to the Abbey of Essay, Normandy, but enfranchised by Ed. III., which stood about three and a half miles from Chichester. The parish, anciently part of the Priory Church, one of the most important examples of E.E. architecture in the country, marks the site. Founded by Robert de Haye. He received the honor of Halnac from Hen. I., and erected within his fee a sanctuary to the honour

of the B. Virgin and S. Blaise (Bishop and martyr, patron of Woolcombers), with a house for three Benedictines, which he endowed. Roger de St. John, who married the founder's daughter, added to its possessions, and increased the number of monks to six. His eldest son, William de St. John, making further gifts converted the establishment into a Priory, and raised the number of ecclesiastics to thirteen. Robert, another son, provided for a fourteenth, and William de St. John further provided for a fifteenth—the usual complement. Later Lords of Halnac, with others, were benefactors. John de Harundel gave certain Chichester property, in consideration of the monks equipping him for the Holy Land. The Priory seal, a dual arrangement, is still preserved, and we are therefore enabled to give an illustration from a recent and perfect impression. It is of gilt bronze, and affords an example of those complicated instances referred to in our Introduction (page 20) as being composed of more than one piece. In this instance the matrices are four in number, two each for the obverse and reverse, one to stamp the figures in the background, the other the architectural facades. Exhibited upon the obverse is a highly-elaborated elevation of a church, with central tower of three pinnacles. Within two trefoiled niches under this tower (in reference to the first person of the dedication) the Annunciation is presented. Above, in a triangular pediment with trefoiling inside, the half-length figure of Our Lord, nimbussed, lifting up the right hand in benediction. In a niche on both sides, below a quatrefoil panel, the representation of a monk similarly reduced. And in the base, within a lozenge cusped, the head of S. Blaise.

SIGILL' : ECCL'E : SCĒ : MARIE : SCĪQ : BLASII : DE : BOXGRAVA.

PLATE IV. Seal 8.

The reverse displays beneath a sculptured, and trefoiled canopy without supports, and upon a corbel foliated, the B. Virgin crowned and nimbussed, with the Child on her left knee, and a conventional lily flower in her right hand, enthroned between two box trees, on each of which a bird is perched. The allusion of the trees is obvious. The birds have perhaps no other than a natural significance, but legend relates that S. Blaise loved to retire to solitary places in the mountains because of the companionship of birds and beasts who were at home with him, and to this they might point.

DICIT̄ : EX : LIGNO : UIRIDI : BOXG̊VIA : DIGNO : NOĪE : NĀ : CRESCIT · V́TVTIB' · ATQ · VIRESCIT.

Were there not other examples equal—and superior also—to adduce, this beautiful instance would alone bear loud testimony of the high excellence reached in seal art. It was, even to the lettering, exquisitely

wrought. The architecture of the obverse is most minutely detailed, and presented with scrupulous exactitude. If the features of the figures somewhat lack expression, their drawing and disposition are artistic, whilst it would be impossible to give the trees and birds a superior touch. Thomas West, Lord Delawarr, begged ardently but vainly of Cromwell to spare the Priory. About 1780 A.D. a farmhouse was erected of its ruins, and fragments are yet discernible. The nave of the Church is in a ruinous state; it is the choir, restored, which now serves parochial uses.

BRADENSTOKE, Austin Priory of St. Mary, co. Wilts.

PLATE XVI. SEAL 31.

ONE of the four monastic centres which stood on, or near the banks of the Avon. Erected A.D. 1142 by Walter de Eureux, or de Saresbiria—father of Patrick, Earl of Salisbury, and great grandfather of Ela, "a woman worthy of all honour because full of the fear of the Lord," wife of the renowned Earl of Salisbury, William Longspée—who afterwards became a canon of his own foundation. In the time of Hen. IV. the hospital of Wotton Basset was annexed. The patronage was afterwards exercised by the sovereign in right of the Duchy of Lancaster. Our illustration of the corporate seal is served by an injured, but fair impression. It presents the B. Virgin, the patroness, crowned, with the Holy Child on the left knee, seated on a considerably embellished throne, beneath a canopy gracefully trefoiled, upheld by slender columns and surmounted by a Church with tall spire and pinnacles. On either side appears an angel swinging a censer, at the foot a sculptured corbel, with a quatrefoil containing the head of a canon below, and in the field a star and crescent—in this instance emblems of the B. Virgin, the first suggested by her title *Stella Matutina*, the second by a phrase from the *Canticle of Canticles—pulchra ut luna.*

SIGILL' : ECCL'IE : BEAT[E : MARIE : D]E : BRADENESTOKA.

A very devotional instance this, gracefully as well as ornately conceived, and possessing great artistic merit which the condition of the impression tends rather to obscure. In their anatomy, proportions, and postures the chief figures are almost faultless; their vestures are skilfully treated. Its archæological value lies chiefly, perhaps, in the excellent delineation of what was no doubt the Priory Church above the canopy. The house was built in considerable magnificence. Important remains exist, consisting of refectory, Prior's house, and domestic offices. A

trio of beautifully-traced windows illumine the hall which is now partitioned. The refectory has three doors, which opened respectively upon the kitchen, cellar, and buttery; the Prior's chambers, a corner staircase and turret. Of the Church there are no vestiges.

BRADSOLE, Premonstratensian Abbey of S. Radegund, co. Kent.

PLATE XLIX. Seal 97.

This foundation was once of considerable affluence, but afterwards became depleted of much of its estate. It stood upon a hill about two and a half miles S.W. of Dover in the parish of Polton. To a few canons who settled here *c.* A.D. 1191 was given, with the consent of Rich. I., Walter de Polton, mesne lord of the fee, and Stephen his son, the manor of Bradsole by Walter Hacket and his wife Emma. There were other benefactors. King John confirmed the various gifts made to it up to the period of his reign, which were afterwards largely extended. It had a cell at Blackewose in the neighbourhood, which previously belonged to Lavinden Priory. Through the instrumentality of the Barons of Hythe it was annexed to this house when in a poverty-stricken and ruinous state. With other barons, the Abbot towards the end of the reign of Ed. I. was summoned to Parliament. The situation being considered somewhat inconvenient, a proposal was on foot in the time of K. John to change it, but the removal was never effected. Our illustration of the Abbey seal is obtained from an impression which, although in an excellent state of preservation, we could wish was a little more clearly defined. The design comprises the patroness, S. Radegund (Queen of France, a Saint of the sixth age of the Church, whose feast occurs on August 13th) enthroned, delivering to an Abbot who kneels on the left before her, a pastoral staff.

✠SIGILL' : ABBATIS : ET : CONVENTVS : SANCTE : RADEGVNDIS.

The theme alone is sufficient to render this example of peculiar interest, but its virtue is not so limited. In every sense the treatment it received was excellent. What often strikes us forcibly in scanning these little memorials is the really extraordinary amount of imagery frequently crowded, without defiance of canon or law, into the allotted space. Here is a case in point. In the inclusion of the two figures within the awkward *vesica* an obvious difficulty was skilfully overcome by the artist giving the head of S. Radegund quite a natural and appropriate inclination towards

the other figure, and almost unnoticeably curtailing the latter. Both are accurately sketched, deftly draped, and naturally posed. The features of the Abbot are distinctly good ; those of the Saint are not particularly lucid. In part, the remains of the Abbey were converted into a farmhouse. They still afford a fair idea of the dimensions and character of the ancient edifice.

BRISTOL, Austin Canons' Abbey of S. Augustine, co.'s Somerset and Gloucester.

PLATE XX.

SEAL 39.

ONE of the thirteen religious houses which at the Dissolution encircled the walls of the city, and which up to that time shared with the Hospital of the Gaunt's (founded by the Berkeley's after their intermarriage with the Gaunt's, barons of Folkingham) the greatest note. Established in the reign of King Stephen by Robert FitzHarding. Robert was a son of Harding (reputed to have been a younger son of the King of Denmark) who had attached himself to the Conqueror, and received as a reward for his services a large grant of lands and property in and around Bristol. Being the eldest son, Robert succeeded to the estates and afterwards became lord of Berkeley, the manor and barony of which, previously held from the crown by Roger de Berkeley, was conferred upon him by Hen. II. In A.D. 1140 he commenced the building of this house, and in its erection and endowment spent a large part of his wealth. The Church was consecrated and dedicated on Easter Day A.D. 1148, when the founder laid his deed of gift upon the high altar. Previously to his death he became an inmate, and was subsequently buried here in a monk's habit and cowl. His family was noted for a long series of benefactions to the Church in general. The foundation was advanced to the dignity of an Abbey by Hen. II., probably as a mark of his appreciation of the important services rendered by Robert FitzHarding to his mother, the Empress Maud, and himself, when Henry Plantagenet, in their contest for the crown with the usurper Stephen. The page of Bristol's history is a tumultuous one, and, increasing in wealth and exercising considerable influence during the centuries it flourished, by this the Abbey must have been closely affected. Our corresponding illustration, supplied by a good impression, is of a counter-seal which probably belonged to William de Bradeston, first Prior and then Abbot. To the latter dignity he was advanced A.D. 1234, and resigned it after eight years government. The design, which has no local or personal bearing, conveys a famous incident

of the Resurrection :—Our Lord appearing to S. Thomas. Here the doubting Apostle is seen (his name appearing above) kneeling to his Crucified Redeemer (whose Head is nimbussed), placing his hand to confound his doubts into the wound in His side.

✠IMINET ECCE CRVOR · ET DEITATE FRVOR.

This little instance unites the charming and the devotional. The field was too small to admit of very fine engraving, consequently the secondary figure suffered somewhat in delineation. The chief, however, possesses considerable merit, and the seal as a whole is artistic. Bristol Abbey was a very rich one. In A.D. 1542 when the episcopate of Bristol was erected, its site and a part of its lands were appropriated to the Bishopric. A fragment of the original structure still survives in a Norman gateway, one of the best instances of its kind extant. Its splendid Church continues to-day as the Cathedral of Bristol.

BROMHOLM, Cluniac Priory of S. Andrew, co. Norfolk.

PLATE XXVII. Seal 54.

The objective of a famous pilgrimage, alluded to in his vision by Piers Plowman, which stood about three miles from Norwich in what is now the parish of Keswick. Originally a cell to Castleacre Priory, it was liberated by a Bull of Pope Celestine. William de Glanvill appears as the founder in A.D. 1113, and such gifts as it received from him were confirmed and extended by his son Bartholomew de Glanville. Other benefactors included King Stephen and Hen. I. Hen. III. granted a fair on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross and the two succeeding days, with a weekly market. What drew pilgrims here in great numbers was a Cross composed of fragments of the True Cross set up in a chapel. It occasioned several miraculous cures. Matthew Paris relates the story, that an English priest who officiated in the Greek Emperor's chapel at Constantinople had in his custody this Cross which he, on the death of the Emperor in A.D. 1223, brought into England. Desiring to enter a religious house with his son, he declined to part with the relic unless they were so admitted. The monks here permitted them to enter their Priory, and so gained possession. By reason of the offerings laid before it the house became exceedingly rich. Unfortunately the impression illustrated is imperfect, but not to the extent of denying a good idea of the original seal. The design exhibits the Priory Church. In a pediment, and within a sunk trefoiled window, occurs a half-length representation of

the B. Virgin with the Divine Infant, and in the centre of the Church, beneath a round-headed arch, S. Andrew the patron enthroned and nimbussed, holding in his hand not his customary saltire, but the renowned Cross of Bromholm, and in his left a book. On the left of the roof is a rose, and on the right another probably appeared in correspondence, but the state of the impression is such as to leave this to conjecture.

. . . . . M ✠ SANCTI ✠ ANDREE ✠ DE ✠ BROM[HOLM].

As the fine fragment presented reveals, the claims of this seal were such as to justly place it amongst the finest examples of the period. The scheme is a commendable one. What chiefly strikes us in regard to it is the remarkable vigour displayed in the portrayal of the central figure and the unrestrained boldness of its conception. From the illustration it is difficult to realize that it is not a reproduction of some large piece of sculpture we are examining instead of a seal which measures no more than three inches in diameter. The work, it would seem to be, is that of an artist accustomed to manipulate with chisel large masses of stone no less skilfully than with graver small pieces of metal—of a man accustomed both to think and act boldly. The delineation of the Church is most praiseworthy. Considerable remains of this house may yet be seen. They consist chiefly of the great gateway, a large part of the Church, portions of the kitchen and other offices and lodgings.

BURY S. EDMUNDS, Benedictine Abbey, co. Suffolk.

PLATE XXI.

Seal 41.

After Glastonbury, perhaps the most superb of English Abbeys. It lay situate between the two ancient Churches of SS. Mary and James. Famed equally for its learning, sanctity, and wealth. The Abbot sat in Parliament and decided causes within his extensive Franchise. The possessions of the house included the royalties of several hundreds. At the Dissolution, when the degradation of surrender provoked the Abbot's death, its annual revenue reached an immense sum. Its many privileges which embraced the right of coinage were extraordinary and valuable. Ornamented in a most artistic and costly fashion, sufficient architectural vestiges exist to recall the beauty, extent and magnificence of its ancient buildings. In A.D. 855 Edmund succeeded King Offa in the kingdom of the East Angles, and fifteen years later was brutally murdered by the Danes. He was buried in an obscure chapel at Hoxne, and subsequently canonized. About thirty-three years after his death his remains were

removed to Bury (then called "Beodric's worthe," and since Bury S. Edmund's) by Leofric, a priest, who raised a Church here in his honour, and with seven or eight seculars settled beside it. By A.D. 915 the clergy had increased to nineteen, when King Athelstan is reputed to have incorporated them. Later his brother King Edmund, King Edwy, Theodred Bishop of London, and others conferred upon the college gifts and advantages. As a Benedictine Abbey the establishment was refounded in the reign of Cnut. In A.D. 1020, upon the site of the original Church the foundations of another were laid. The King bestowing at the same time many privileges made it several important grants, and Ailwin, Bishop of Elmham, that the power of the Abbot might be increased considerably reduced his prerogatives, and ordained that the jurisdiction of the Abbey, and the radius of a mile from the town should thenceforth be vested in the Abbot. In the new Church, dedicated to Christ, the B. Virgin and S. Edmund, the martyrs' relics were richly enshrined. Here Cnut frequently paid his devotions and offered it his crown. The Confessor also often came to the shrine, and always performed the last mile of his pilgrimage on foot. By him the Abbot was constituted lord of the Franchise—the jurisdiction of eight hundreds and a half, and the receipt of their royalties—and from him received the privilege of a mint. Soon after the Conquest the Church was destroyed and another immediately commenced. William commanded the Abbot of Peterborough to allow the Abbot of Bury as much stone free of toll from the quarries of Barnack, as was needed for the work of rebuilding. Having journeyed to Rome to obtain a Bull from Alexander II., Baldwin, the Abbot, returned laden with gifts, which included an altar of porphyry vested with this privilege, that unless expressly interdicted Mass should always be solemnized within the Abbey as long as the altar stood. The third Abbey Church was completed A.D. 1095, and S. Edmund's relics translated there in the year following. Hen. I. granted a fair of six days. On his return from Chartres he made a pilgrimage hither, and in thanksgiving for a safe return made a valuable offering to the shrine. To S. Edmund Hen. II. attributed the victory he achieved in the battle fought against his rebellious sons, he having caused the martyrs' banner to be carried in front of his army. Rich. I. before embarking upon the Crusade also visited the shrine and made presents. Afterwards he gave to the Church the banner of Isaac, King of Cyprus. Eleanor the Queen of the first Plantagenet gave several valuable jewels. The use of these for life King John cajoled the Abbot to give him, but whilst snatching the profits of other houses during the interdict he spared the coffers of Bury. Previously, A.D. 1205 the earls and barons held a council antagonistic to him here, and in A.D. 1216 Lewis, the dauphin of France, whose support they had enlisted,

robbed the monastery of many valuables, and, it was long supposed, the relics of S. Edmund also, which he was reputed to have taken to France. Dissensions occasionally arose between the monks and the people. The most deplorable occurred in A.D. 1327, when 20,000 men made an assault upon the Abbey, and committed great destruction. Punishment upon the rebels was swift and severe, many being executed. One of the chief legends related of S. Edmund records the discovery of his head. The Danes had him beaten, shot at with arrows and beheaded, finally throwing his body and dissevered head into the densest part of a wood. At first his people failed to discover the latter. Search was continued. Some of those who sought missed their way and shouted to their companions "Where are you?" A strange voice replied "Here! here!" Advancing in its direction the missing head was found in a thicket carefully guarded by a wolf. This legend was a favourite subject of mediæval representation, and with the torture and martyrdom of S. Edmund this the obverse of the Privy seal of the Abbey, illustrated here from an impression neither altogether perfect or distinct but on the whole fairly satisfactory, in part conveys. The design comprises in the upper section the royal martyr fastened to a tree with strange overhanging branches, and being shot at by five archers; in the lower, under a trefoiled arch, his decapitation, where a wolf is seen bearing off with the crowned head; at the bottom of the scheme two more trees occur, and above them three pierced beads or pearls.

[SIGN]VM : SECRETVM : CAPL'I : . . . . . ÆDMVNDI :
REGIS : ET : MARTIRI[S.]

PLATE XXI. SEAL 42, The reverse in its design also commemorated the popular dedicatory, and two of the Abbey benefactors also. It displayed S. Edmund crowned and enthroned, beneath a sculptured canopy of three arches (one trefoiled) surmounted by a Church-like structure, between two prelates (each of whom supports a pastoral staff in the outer hand, and raises the inner towards the King), Theodred Bishop of London (or Egelmar, Bishop of Elmham, an eleventh century benefactor), and Ailwin, Bishop of Elmham. Below the platform upon which the figures rest is a trefoiled aperture and an embattled wall, and here, as on the obverse, three beads or pearls appear.

AGMINE : STIPATVS : SEDE[T : E]D : REX :
PONTIFICA[TVS].

Judged critically and closely by the strictest canons, the art exhibited in the execution of the very quaint obverse, it must be confessed, does not reach a particularly high standard. Examined as a whole, and in a general way it relates its story in a striking and graphic manner. To achieve this is to realize a fundamental principle in a work of Art, and so far, and with

effect, our artist succeeded. Within this diminutive space the particulars of the torture, degradation, and martyrdom concluding with the legend of the wolf are all related in the fullest detail and, our higher criticism notwithstanding, the design has much to commend it. As we count up the number of arrows transfixed in the Saint's body, however, we cannot help wondering why the sanguinary Danes considered decapitation a necessary operation. The impression illustrated as regards the reverse has suffered much from pressure, and also apparently from a spreading of the wax. Under these circumstances a full appraisement is not feasible. Obviously its conception was of some richness, and as is also sufficiently indicated the drapery was treated in an artistic fashion. Altogether, it reveals a higher skill in its execution than that shewn in the preceding, and had we before us an impression fresh from the matrix we should no doubt find but few defects to condemn it.

PLATE XLVIII. SEAL 95. COUNTER-SEAL of Simon de Luton, who was elected Abbot February, A.D. 1257, and confirmed by Alexander IV. the following November. An excellent impression. This also exhibits, under a trefoiled canopy, the decollation of S. Edmund. A wolf is shewn guarding the head, and above the canopy, between two churches or parts of churches, a half-length representation of the B. Virgin, nimbussed, with the Child on the left knee. The art of this little example, conceived with much grace and executed with considerable delicacy, is both telling and happy. Whatever defects are visible—and they exist—in the delineation of the martyr are compensated for by the remarkable treatment of the executioner the features of whom, in spite of the diminution of that figure, are perfectly distinct and natural; in their expression we can see fear, if not remorse as a consequence of the act just perpetrated. The features of the King are also discernible.

VIRGO : DEVM : FERT : DVX : CAPUD : AUFERT : Q'D : LVP^{9} : HIC : FERT :

During Simon's abbacy the Franciscans, to the annoyance of the monks, made their first appearance at Bury, upon which a long dispute ensued and finally ended in the removal of the friars without the jurisdiction of the town. Within this period also the Pope granted to the King a tenth of the goods of the Abbey barony. The Bishop of Norwich fled hither whilst the barons plundered that city; and Hen. III. whilst at the Abbey was seized with the malady which terminated in his death. In A.D. 1272 he had held a Parliament here which, it has been stated, may be considered as the outline of a British House of Commons, and it was on returning later the fatality of his disorder manifested itself.

PLATE XXX. SEAL 59. THE final illustration contributed by Bury S. Edmunds, also derived from a good impression, is that of the seal of Walter, an uncertain Abbot or Prior. This, too, conveys the legend of the wolf, who is here seen, before a conventional tree, bearing away to the right the crowned head of the martyred King. One of the more charming of our minor examples, and most skilfully treated. The martyr's head is designed with such minuteness that the features are distinctly seen to wear a pleasant expression. Strictly, the wolf should have been placed at the foot of the tree, but for this the *vesica* afforded no room. To get over the difficulty the engraver boldly drew the animal with its sacred burden across the tree, and it is not immediately we discover the offence against the laws both of perspective and gravity. Differently treated, the same device affords the subject of the corporate seal of the borough of Bury S. Edmund.

✠OSTENDV̄T · SIGNV̄ · GALTERI · REX · LVPA · LIGNV̄.

Chiefly, the remaining vestiges of this glorious Abbey comprise the gate (of Decorated style), which is yet complete, bridge, also well preserved, and detached parts of the walls.

CANTERBURY, Priory of Christ Church, co. Kent.

PLATE XLVII. SEAL 94. ONE of the two great conventual foundations laid in this city, vast alike in its grandeur, wealth, influence, and power. It lay situate adjoining the Mother Church of England, to which it was attached until the Dissolution when out of this house the Cathedral was erected. Through the generosity of King Ethelbert it was originally founded by S. Augustine. Having landed A.D. 597 at Ebbe's Fleet, an important point of embarkation in pre-historic times in the Isle of Thanet, he, assured of a friendly welcome by the Kentish sovereign whose wife was a Christian, with his forty monks advanced upon Canterbury. He took up his residence at the "Stable Gate," near the present Church of S. Alphege, and was allowed to worship with his followers at S. Martin's without the walls. On the 2nd July Ethelbert was baptised, and on the Christmas Day following ten thousand people of Kent were received into the Christian fold in the waters of the Swale. Soon after Ethelbert resigned his palace to the "Apostle of the English," who converted it into a Priory, named it Christ Church, and took up his residence there with his fellow-missionaries. From the commencement the Priory was liberally endowed, but as time advanced its

estate reached enormous proportions. The property of the Archbishops and monks was held by both in common. The history of the house is bound up with that of the archiepiscopate, that of the archiepiscopate with the annals of the country. The wealth and importance of the metropolitan city exposed it to frequent inroads, and in the evil consequences of these it shared. After the brutal murder of S. Thomas á Becket within its walls, the Church, where his remains were enshrined, became the objective of the famous Canterbury Pilgrimage, a peculiar feature of mediæval life of which Chaucer has given such a vivid and immortal description. From all parts of Christendom the devout flocked here in great numbers, and showered upon the tomb of the murdered Archbishop gifts of incalculable value. Every fiftieth year was held a grand jubilee in commemoration of his Translation, when indulgences were granted to all who came. The festival lasted two weeks, and was timed from midnight on the vigil of the feast. The feud which commenced between the monks of this and those of the rival house, arising out of the claim of exemption, constituted not the least conspicuous incident in the career of the Priory. It continued with much acerbity until the Reformation, and is historic. Near the Cathedral certain indications of this celebrated house still exist. The first of our illustrations pertaining to it is taken from an excellent impression of the seal of a Prior, Roger de la Lee. In design it comprised a mitred ecclesiastical figure, either intended for S. Augustine, S. Thomas of Canterbury, or other canonized member of the archiepiscopate, standing upon a sculptured corbel. He grasps the folds of his cloak with his right hand, and holds a book in the left.

✠SIGILL' ROGERI PRIORIS ECCL'E CRISTI CANTVARIE.

The scheme is that of the most archaic of its class, a fine and bold example which reveals clever, but not superlative manipulation of the graver. In the figure from the neck its merit chiefly lies; the vesture is distinctly good, whilst quite naturally the right hand clutches the cloak. The features are void of expression, and repudiate the idea of very studious treatment. Obviously the design suffered through the entire absence of Gothic feeling, and between it and the illustration the subject of the description immediately following comparison is invited.

PLATE XXIX. SEAL 58.

Our second illustration relating to this Priory, derived from an injured but very fine impression, is of the seal of another Prior, Henry de Eastry. It comprehended upon a field diapered lozengy—a minute cinquefoil or sixfoil in each space—an elegant canopy with pointed arch and crocketted pinnacles, upheld by slender columns, under which a similar ecclesiastical figure with embroidered vestments and mitre stands upon a carved

corbel. In this instance a book is clasped with both hands, and in the field on either side appeared, enclosed in a quatrefoil panel, the head of a monk.

. S' HENRICI PRIORIS EC[CLE]SIE XP̄I CANTVARIE.

Of its kind this proffers a rich example, Essentially, the type is that of the preceding delineated in the richness of development. The suggested comparison between the seal of Prior Roger, free from Gothic influence, and this prepossessed by it forcibly and lucidly manifests the effect of that influence and its depth. Here the figure is vested for Mass. The expert manner in which the vestments have been dealt with cannot fail to provoke admiration. In the figure itself good modelling is shewn, whilst the features are full of expression. Altogether, the seal is artistically perfect and may be placed amongst the finer mediæval works of its order.

Benedictine Abbey of SS. Peter, Paul, and Augustine.

PLATE XLV.

Seal 89.

The other grand conventual institution of the city, the powerful rival of which it was almost in wealth, altogether in renown and power. Being of Abbatial rank and mitred this was the most dignified foundation. Its rent roll nearly occupies four columns of the contracted pages of Domesday, and its growth from age to age was in equal correspondence with Christ Church. To that establishment it lay near at hand, without the ancient walls of the city but very close to them, to the south east. The present Missionary College was erected upon its site. Its remains are still extensive, and comprise massive towers, very beautiful gateways, and large masses of the boundary, Church, and office walls. Like its ancient and inveterate rival it was originally founded through the munificence of King Ethelbert by S. Augustine. It was his original plan to divide distinctly monastic from the purely secular work of the episcopate. Accordingly, shortly after the completion of Christ Church S. Augustine laid the foundations of the Abbey near a once pagan Temple then consecrated to S. Pancras. In A.D. 978 it was restored and enlarged by S. Dunstan, then Archbishop of Canterbury, at which time S. Augustine was added to the original patronage of SS. Peter and Paul. Gradually it became popularly known as S. Augustine's. In early times it claimed superiority over Christ Church, of which it was extremely jealous because of the great distinctions conferred upon the latter, and its possession of the famous shrine of S. Thomas. Until the Dissolution it flourished exceedingly. Illustrations of two seals belonging to it are here presented. The first, obtained by means of an excellent impression is that employed by Roger of Chichester, who was

Abbot from A.D. 1252-72. It exhibited in elevation and section an architectural façade, shaped in conformity with the area of the *vesica*, detailed with numerous windows and cusped apertures, and spires. Below a cusped archway, in the centre stands upon a carved corbel the Abbot, Roger, vested and mitred, with a pastoral staff in the right hand, in the left a book. Above the doorway appears a minute representation of the Abbey Church, and on either side of the figure a cusped panel of oval shape, each of which contains the head of a monk.

: SIGILL' ROGERI DEI GRA AB' . . . . SCI AVGVSTINI : CANTVARIE :

Abbot Roger's seal, a very beautiful Gothic instance perfect in its art, continues essentially the type of those of Priors Roger and Henry of Christ Church, but in its design exhibits a treatment quite distinct from that revealed by either. Similarly with the latter it may well be placed with the finest productions of its class and period. To several corporate examples illustrated in this work the architectural features of the scheme respond closely. This section has been executed elaborately and with care, whilst the delineation of the figure reveals no less. It is worthy of note, as elucidating the attention usually bestowed upon these productions that two distinct scales are involved in the presentment of the façade, and the tiny Church at the apex. The first is quite a conventional structure, but in all probability we have in the second a substantially accurate view of the contemporary Abbey Church. Pope Urban A.D. 1258 granted Abbot Roger power to absolve all persons who were professed in his house from excommunication. He built a new refectory, founded the chapel of Kinsdowne, and richly enshrined the relics of S. Mildred. Till his time the monks shaved each other in the cloister, but he, because they were often wont through lack of skill to cut and hurt one another, decreed that shaving should thenceforth be undertaken by laymen.

PLATE XLIX. SEAL 98.

OUR second example is served by an impression of the Abbot's Privy seal. It was an official instance, employed successively by the heads of the house for the purpose suggested. The design is of three sections. In the first, at the apex, occurs under a canopy with square-headed arch the half length representation of two Saints, probably designed for SS. Peter and Paul. The central contains within a canopied niche with trefoiled arches, supported on four slender shafts, the enthronement of S. Augustine, mitred, who raises the right hand in blessing, and grasps a pastoral staff with the sinister. In the third, at the base, a half-length delineation of the Abbot is presented under a trefoiled arch, kneeling in prayer to the left.

SIGILL' SECRETI · AB̄B̄IS · SC̄I · AVGVST⁹ : CANTVAR'.

Whilst the impression here illustrated is clear in outline, it suffers somewhat from a lack of distinctness, moreover, comparatively speaking, the relief in which the seal was graven, in its depth usually a marked and admirable feature, is not particularly fine. We are scarcely enabled, through the second circumstance, to fully appreciate the value of the skill employed upon it. The scheme, however, is to a limited extent uncommon, and in the disposition of its elements distinctly good. The seal is an interesting specimen from various points, chief of which is that S. Augustine is depicted upon it with the pallium.

CERNE (or Cernell), Benedictine Abbey of SS. Mary, Peter, and Benedict, co. Dorset.

PLATE XLI. SEAL 82.

A SAXON foundation of large possessions, the site of which is still marked by a gatehouse, or square embattled tower—considered to have been the principal entrance—the sum of its remains. According to Malmesbury, S. Augustine after the conversion of Kent travelled throughout all England except Northumbria, and upon reaching here was driven away by the inhabitants. Anticipating a change in their attitude towards him he exclaimed to his followers, *Cerno Deum qui et nobis retribuit gratiam, et furentibus illis emendatiorem infundet animam.* The people repented of their hostility, begged pardon of the Saint, and beseeched his return, circumstances which he attributed to God. Augustine went back, named the place *Cernel*, compounded of Hebrew *Hel* or *El*, God, and Latin *Cerno*, and here a hermitage sprang up. To it Athelwold, brother of S. Edmund retired. In the days of King Ethelred, Ethelmer, a nobleman of his court, founded upon it this monastery which he liberally endowed. Ælfric, the first Abbot, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Cnut when King of Denmark was charged with the plunder and destruction of the Abbey. After he reached the throne of England, however, he compensated for this by the gift of lands and bestowal of privileges. Hen. II., Ed. I., and Ed. III. also appear to have benefacted. The Abbot in the sixth year of the reign of Rich. I. was mulcted in the sum of forty shillings scutage for that King's redemption. The impression remaining of the seal, although imperfect, conveys a good idea of the original, and is selected for reproduction here on account of its excellent and archæologically valuable architectural detail. It displayed an elevation of the West front of the Abbey Church (now completely obliterated) richly detailed in the

contemporary (E.E.) style, upheld by the half length figures (placed under two round-headed and masoned arches) of the original founder S. Augustine, and the second founder Ethelmer. A small bird occurred on the foliated crockets of the roof to the left and right, and behind each of the figures a cinquefoil. The legend in the impression is wholly wanting. Gothic elevations in seal art are as a rule largely conventional, but a glance at the fine fragment described is adequate to inspire regret that a perfect impression of what must have been a remarkable example of monastic seal production is no longer available. Even this imperfect object not only convinces us that the architecture was presented with great skill, but incites the hypothesis that in this instance also with unusual truth. Since not one stone of the edifice it represents remains above another, upon the assumption of the accuracy of our conjecture as to the realistic nature of this representation depends that archæological value we have hinted it possesses.

CHAUCUMBE (or Sawcomb), Austin Canons' Priory of SS. Peter and Paul, co. Northampton.

PLATE XXII.

SEAL 44.

A SMALL establishment, few details of which exist. Although an earlier founder is named in an ancient rent roll—Hugh de Anesy, a Norman knight, who accompanied the Conqueror to England—it was actually erected in the time of Hen. II. by Hugh de Chacombe or Sawcomb, lord of the manor. The charter of foundation was witnessed by Walkelin, Abbot of S. James, Northampton, and Alexander, Prior of Canons Ashby. It is suggested that Hugh de Anesy was an ancestor of the founder. Two chantries in the reign of Ed. III. were raised within the church ; one by Edmund de Bereford, a clerk, who gave a Warwickshire manor to provide four canons for the celebration of masses in advancement of the spiritual welfare of his father and mother, the King, and Henry, Bishop of Lincoln ; the other by the convent for a knightly patron, Sir John de Lyons. The matrix of the seal employed by the canons being yet extant we are enabled to present a reproduction of a perfect impression. It generally illustrates the dual dedication, and exhibits in detail below a reversed arc or bow, containing a Hand (typical of a Heavenly benediction) with the third and fourth finger closed in upon the palm, full-length representations of the two patrons SS. Peter and Paul, who, with their respective emblems confront each other, and stand upon another bow or arc, contrarily disposed, under which the Prior, partially delineated, kneels and supplicates them.

✠SIGILL' · APOSTOLORV̄ · PETRI · ET · PAVLI · DE · CHAVCVMBA.

This seal may be assigned to a very early time within our period, before the Gothic influence had wholly asserted itself, or found general expression. Its design is singularly chaste and lucid, and in its execution considerable skill is exhibited. In delineating S. Peter the artist, it will be observed, was not guided by tradition, but gave us his realization of the Apostle in the figure of a youth instead. Upon this figure he obviously lavished particular pains; it is exceedingly well draped, whilst the features are accurately and pleasantly drawn. The attitude of S. Paul is a trifle antagonistic (a view which the presence and position of the sword may accentuate), and it would seem as if S. Peter was giving the soft answer which turneth away wrath. Of the early excellence of seal art, it is adduced as a striking example. The village of Chaucumbe, wherein the Priory, to the north, was situated, lies in a deep and secluded valley which ascends to the parish Church—anciently an appropriation of the canons. Out of the ruins of the monastic establishment a manorial seat was erected soon after the Dissolution. Until the eighteenth century was well advanced the gatehouse and lodge continued. The site is now occupied by a comparatively modern mansion. The only traces, and these but slight, of the ancient Priory are visible in one of the domestic offices.

CHERTSEY, Mitred Benedictine Abbey of S. Peter, co. Surrey.

PLATE VII.

Seal 13.

The first monastic institution raised in the county. In Saxon and later periods a house of considerable note and dignity. It stood upon a spot just beyond the site of the Church of the parish of Chertsey (where the South Saxon Kings resided during the Heptarchy) which contains an ancient bell of the Abbey. Its possessions were very numerous, but although mitred and regarded as a spiritual baron, the Abbot had no seat in Parliament Founded, upon what was then an island in the Thames, *c.* A.D. 666 by Frithewald, viceroy or Earl of Surrey under Wulpherus King of Mercia, and S. Erconwald, who, as already related, founded somewhere about this time for his sister S. Ethelburga an abbey at Barking. Erconwald was the first Abbot; he personally obtained from Pope Agatho a Bull granting special privileges to his house, over which he continued to preside until called to fill the episcopate of London. In the ninth century, during the Abbacy of Beocca, the Danes slew almost a hundred monks, burnt both the

Church and monastery, and as was their wont committed great devastation. Restored in the time of K. Edgar, and at his direction, by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, when it was re-endowed with its ancient possessions and filled with monks from Abingdon. The Church and buildings erected at this time continued until A.D. 1110, when, whilst Hugh of Winchester a relation of King Stephen ruled, the pile was re-erected entirely. The Confessor and other sovereigns were considerable benefactors. Altogether, the Abbey possessed extensive lands spread over four counties, a cell in Cardigan, a house in London, and no less than twenty-five manors. Hy. VI., whose remains were interred within the Church prior to their removal to Windsor, granted a fair on S. Anne's Day which as "Black Cherry Fair" survives. The seal given, obtained from a fine impression, is that of Bartholomew de Winton, Abbot, A.D. 1272-1307, who, charged with alienating certain possessions of his house, provoked from Pope Gregory X. a Bull addressed to the Prior of Dorchester, which authorized him to enquire and define as void any illicit conveyance the Abbot might have made. It exhibited his effigy vested for Mass beneath a trefoiled canopy unsupported, and standing upon a corbel, holding a staff in one hand, a book in the other. Over the trefoiling appeared a miniature Church, and in the field two small niches with pointed arches and crocketted spires, which respectively contained the heads of SS. Peter and Paul with their emblems below.

S' BARTHOLOMEI : DEI : GR̄A : ABBATIS : CERTESEYE :

Compared with the seals of Prior Henry of Christ Church, and Abbot Roger of S. Augustine's (Canterbury), the type of which differently treated it pursued, the seal of the Abbot of Chertsey illustrated, although the figure it displayed was well modelled and draped and presented in excellent relief, falls somewhat short of the artistic standard of both. The little niches at the sides reveal negligence in their delineation; they are ill-balanced, and have the appearance of being squeezed in hurriedly as the issue of an afterthought. The Church at the apex is distinctly worked, but entirely lacks character. The Abbey was mitred as we have stated, but the figure, it is curious to note, does not wear the head-dress that dignity carried. As the title in this case was largely nominal, however, the omission may have been intentional. The place and value of the symbolic system in Art is here manifested. Anxious to introduce the figures of SS. Peter and Paul, and the space available forbidding, the engraver resorted to it with the fullest effect. The ground plan of this celebrated Abbey is still discernible, but an arch and a few vestiges of the barn exhaust all architectural remains. The streets of the town are supposed to have been raised by fragments of the masonry. The ancient fish ponds are yet preserved.

CHESTER, Benedictine Abbey of S. Werburgh, co. Cheshire.

PLATE XIX.

SEAL 37.

A CELEBRATED Saxon foundation, largely endowed and highly privileged, the situation of which lay a little to the east of the North Gate of this ancient and remarkable city. Of its lost grandeur its magnificent Church, now the Cathedral of the Diocese, continues as an eloquent memorial. The date and circumstance of its origin are obscured, but there can be no question that at a very early period a conventual establishment dedicated to SS. Peter and Paul was in existence here—certainly before A.D. 875. According to tradition it was erected by Wulpherus, King of Mercia (A.D. 670) for his daughter Werburgh (who displayed an inclination for a religious life) and a company of pious maidens, but, whilst it is probable a nunnery originated in this circumstance, it was not located here. In A.D. 875 the remains of S. Werburgh were brought from Heanburgh and enshrined in the already existent foundation of SS. Peter and Paul. Not until then did any connection exist between the royal virgin and the city. How long the original foundation flourished is uncertain, but by the time Athelstan came to the throne, probably through the ravages of the Danes, it had ceased to exist. In his reign Ethelfleda, Countess of Mercia (who restored the walls of the city which the Northmen had destroyed), caused it to be rebuilt in honour of S. Werburgh and S. Oswald (the most Christian of all the rulers of Northumbria) and filled it with secular canons. To the munificence of the Countess the new foundation was indebted for a large part of its endowment, which King Edmund, King Edgar, and Leofric, Earl of Chester considerably enlarged. In A.D. 1093 Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, at the instance of Anselm, Abbot of Bec (afterwards the famous Archbishop of Canterbury), ejected the canons and with his Countess, Ermentruda, refounded and very liberally endowed the house for a society of Benedictines introduced from Normandy. A few days before his death the Earl was himself professed a monk of S. Werburgh's, by which name alone the Abbey became chiefly to be known. As a Benedictine establishment, the frequent subject of royal and other bounty, it descended with an interesting and varied career to the suppression. After his victorious expeditions against the Welsh, in A.D. 1283 Ed. I. with his Queen attended Mass at S. Werburgh's and on that occasion presented a cloth of great value. The monks, as we have hinted, shared numerous privileges ; the right of having an enfranchised boat on the Dee, of fishing with one vessel and ten nets in Anglesea, and the tithe of all fish captured in the river were among them. Until the Dissolution, the tenth salmon caught from off the city bridge was ceded to them without intermission or

question. On the feast of S. Werburgh, who since her remains were brought to Chester has always been regarded as the especial patron of the city, a fair was held annually during which the merchants and purveyors ranged their booths before the great Abbey gate, the ground being strewn with reeds which a particular charter entitled the monks to gather from Stanlaw March. The tolls and profits of this fair formed part of the Abbey emoluments. For all forfeitures in it pleas were held in the court of S. Werburgh. Any malefactor who attended upon these occasions if not guilty of further offence was there unattachable. In its transactions the Abbey employed a rich instance of seal art. For a conception of its scheme we have to rely upon the woefully imperfect, yet fine and lucid fragment illustrated. Deplorable as is the absence of a perfect impression the nature of the vestige is sufficiently adequate to enable us to draw upon conjecture for such details as are wanting. Upon the obverse was displayed a detailed view in elevation and section of a Gothic structure, resembling that of a Church, with transepts and pinnacled tower in the centre at each angle of which flew a flag. In either transept stood the full-length figure of a monk; between them, under the circular-headed and cusped doorway of the tower, S. Werburgh with the staff of an Abbess and book sat enthroned. In a trefoiled aperture created in the pediment of the tower occurred the head of a monk which, in quatrefoil panels, was repeated in the carved plinth of the base and in both transepts.

SIGILL[UM : CONUENTUS : ECCL]ESIE[: SA]NCTE[: WERBURGE] . . . . . .

PLATE XIX. Seal 38.

The reverse also exhibited a Gothic facade which, though of different design, bore some resemblance to the preceding. Here, beneath the arch of the central tower sat upon a throne, crowned and supporting a sceptre fleury and orb surmounted by a cross, the martyred Northumbrian King, S. Oswald (the second patron), and in the transepts the monks give place to the full-length figures of SS. Peter and Paul (patrons of the original foundation and to whom legend relates a Church was erected here in the second century) with their usual emblems. Over the tower in the field appeared a wavy star on the left ; on the right probably a crescent, and in a quatrefoil below the plinth at the base a monk's head as before.

. . . . . UM : . . . . . AM : MA . . . . . [E : SIGILLUM :]

The legend formed a rhyming hexameter verse. The designs of the seal described were magnificently conceived, as the elaboration of the facades evinces, expressed in the fullest detail, and executed with much skill. When perfect, the impressions must have been objects of considerable beauty, and even these which are imperfect can be said to be no less. The architectural

work readily incites our admiration. To the incomplete state of the impression must be added an obvious spreading of the wax in some parts which remain, a circumstance which prevents an equable appreciation of the figures delineated; if they approached the standard reached in the depiction of the drapery of the two central figures they must have been artistically excellent. Out of the dissolved Abbey Hen. VIII. erected the bishopric of Chester, and allotted as a Cathedral the Church annexed. The conventual buildings occupied an almost entire fourth of the city, an instructive statement as to the ancient importance of the Abbey. The Cathedral consists of nave and choir, central tower, transepts and lady chapel. Opposite the pulpit, in the choir, is the stone case which formerly surrounded the shrine of S. Werburgh. Shortened, it is now employed as the Bishop's throne. The south transept was used until A.D. 1882 as the parish Church of S. Oswald. During the civil war the Cathedral sustained great injury. The Bishopric was endowed with a portion only of the possessions of this Abbey.

Carmelite Friary of S. Mary.

PLATE XXXIV. SEAL 67.

A THIRTEENTH century foundation indebted for its institution to Thomas Stadham, gentleman. It stood within the parish of S. Martin, and in a street still called White Friars on that account. Attached to it was a splendid Church, with a steeple (erected A.D. 1496, and destroyed a century later) of great beauty and height, "the only sea-mark for direction over the bar of Chester." Information concerning the Friary is very slight. The Prior's seal, an official not personal specimen, forms the subject of our corresponding illustration which is derived from an excellent impression. Conjecturally, in point of date it is equivalent to that of the establishment of the Carmelites here, A.D. 1279, and on that assumption rather a late instance of our period. Within a beaded bordure, the device comprehended the B. Virgin standing upon a carved corbel, holding the Child upon her left arm between two candles in candlesticks, introduced in a devotional sense.

· S' · P'ORIS · CESTRIE · FR̃M · DE · CARMELO.

A minor exemplification, pious and artistic without any special claims to the final definition. In such tiny instances, as considering their size could scarcely be expected, seldom was a high standard attained. The figure of the Virgin in its pose is fairly dignified, but in its modelling, proportion and draping does not sustain acute categorical criticism. The features are good, and not without emotion. As regards the

candlesticks, these it will be observed do not maintain the perpendicular. Upon the whole, in a collection of this nature where perforce artistic value fluctuates it is not misplaced. All that now remains of the Friary buildings is a doorway. After the Dissolution a mansion, now destroyed, was raised upon the site. At present it is occupied by a venerable house used as chambers—called the Friars—in which the doorway referred to is incorporated.

CHICH (or S. Osyth's), Austin Canons' Priory of SS. Peter, Paul, and Osyth, co. Essex.

PLATE L. SEAL 100.

A NOBLE foundation which lay within the hundred of Tendring eleven miles distant from Colchester. It possessed great wealth, and the repute of being the most ancient monastic institution erected in the county. According to tradition it was founded originally by S. Osyth. S. Osyth was a daughter of Redwald, King of the East Angles. Having made a vow of perpetual virginity she retired here, it is related, and built a nunnery for herself and a number of maidens similarly disposed. About A.D. 635, tradition continues, the settlement was devasted by the Danes, and the foundress beheaded near a fountain adjacent. Upon the legendary site of the convent Richard Beauvais, Bishop of London, *c.* A.D. 1118, established a Priory for Austin Canons under the patronage above indicated. As was usually the case, it became popularly known as S. Osyth's. The first Prior was William de Corboil who succeeded, A.D. 1122, Radulfus de Turbine in the Archbishopric of Canterbury. His elevation revived the ancient controversy for precedence between Canterbury and York. He obtained of Hen. I. the custody of the castle of Rochester, which gave him a feudal position of supreme importance and enabled him to take an active part in the contest for the throne which broke out on the accession of Stephen. He had taken the oath of allegiance to the Empress Maud, but took the chief part in the coronation of King Stephen and joined that prince after the nobility of the kingdom had acknowledged him. It is the *ad causas* seal of the canons which affords the subject of our illustration obtained by means of a perfect impression. Within a beaded bordure the design comprises a pointed canopy (with trefoiled arch) supported by pillars, upon the top of which rests a Church-like structure and under which S. Osyth, clad as an Abbess, stands upon a carved corbel in profile to the right holding her dissevered head, with the emblem of S. Peter (key) on the right, that of S. Paul (sword) on the left of the field. Thus

the scheme is commemorative of all three patrons but responding to popular feeling gives the greater prominence to the royal and virgin martyr.

S' · ECC̄E · SC̄E : OSYTHE · DE : CHIC : AD · CĀS.

A good example—archaic, essentially, in type. Engraved in high relief and good style of art. In the architecture at the apex lies its only weakness, but this reveals negligence of treatment rather than want of capacity to treat. The saintly form is artistic and praiseworthy from every point. It is well drawn, skilfully draped, and reveals in the countenance remarkable clearness, truth, and expression. By no means one of the richer, but assuredly one of the finer of the remains we are considering. The strange delineation of S. Osyth seen here is not peculiar to her. Various Saints who endured martyrdom by decapitation were usually so depicted. Legend attaches to some the rejoining of the head and body with a further period of life, to others miraculous walks and flights in the circumstances under which S. Osyth is depicted here—carrying their heads in their hands. The remains of the Priory are considerable. Except on the north side, which is occupied by some comparatively modern apartments, the quadrangle is almost entire. A beautiful gateway of hewn stone mixed with flint with two towers and posterns also continue, and three towers to the east. The structure now forms a private residence. On the east and west sides of the court are offices which shew traces of great antiquity.

COLCHESTER, Austin Canons' Priory of SS. Julian and Botulph, co. Essex.

PLATE VII.

SEAL 14.

A COMPARATIVELY small establishment, of considerable architectural beauty if the remains of the Church which adjoined afford any indication. It is reputed to have been the first house of the Augustinian order raised in England, but to this distinction there were other claimants. Not far distant from the mitred Abbey of the Benedictines, it stood to the south of the town. Founded by a monk named Ernulph, who endowed the Priory with its site and surrounding gardens, obtained A.D. 1116 of Pope Paschal a Bull enriching it with extraordinary liberties, and became first Prior. Other benefactors—of whom Hugh FitzStephen was one, and Bristerd another—shortly afterwards added to its possessions. Hen. I., after endowing the canons with all the tithes of his demesnes in Hatfield Regis confirmed to them the land and houses they possessed in Colchester, Canterbury and elsewhere, the third part of a mill under the castle and the serjeancy with this curious stipulation, that whenever he or those who came after him

made war in Wales they should furnish for the King's use one horse of five shillings price, a sack and a spur for forty days. A chipped and indistinct impression of the seal illustrated reveals the design to have comprehended beneath a trefoiled arch, our Lord with cruciform nimbus, raising the right Hand in benediction, seated on a sculptured throne between the two patrons (depicted at three-quarters length), S. Botulph vested as an Abbot with book and staff, S. Julian as a Bishop with mitre and staff. In the base under another trefoiled arch is a Church, with tall central spire placed between a star and crescent. S. Julian was Bishop of Toledo. S. Botulph was born of noble parents early in the seventh century. He became a Benedictine monk, and erected a monastery the site of which is indefinite but commonly considered to have been on the river Witham, where stands the town of Boston. The Church there is dedicated to him, and the name of the town is a corruption of that of the Saint. Bishop Ethelwold divided his relics between Ely and Thorney.

SIGILL' ECCLESIE : SANCTI [: BOT]VLFI : DE : COLECESTR'

Although the destruction wrought by man upon the superb Priory Church was far greater than the havoc of time upon the impression before us we cannot but deplore both. The result in the latter case has been to leave us indistinctness where particularly we would have liked lucidity, since from the standpoint of art the seal (an early instance) was obviously a very valuable one. Appraisement of the niceties of portrayal is in the circumstances impossible, but this is manifest, that the scheme was not only excellent but fervently artistic, and that the figures were well drawn and gracefully vested. The design tells its own story—Christ counselling the two patrons in their care of the Church, which was placed under it. Ruins of the Priory which was destroyed at the Dissolution there are now none. During the siege by the Parliamentary forces A.D. 1648 the Church was in a great measure demolished, but considerable remains—fine Early Norman examples—as already hinted, still stand.

COMBE (or Cumbe), Cistercian Abbey of S. Mary, co. Warwick.

PLATE XX.

SEAL 40.

A SPLENDID foundation of great resources, famed throughout four centuries for the liberal hospitality it dispensed daily to strangers and the necessitous. Upon its site stands "Combe Abbey" (the seat of the Earl of Craven), a mansion erected early in the seventeenth century in which three sides of the cloister were incorporated. Founded by Richard de Camvilla, a nobleman, *c.* A.D. 1150, whose son Gerard, with his wife Nichola de Haya, made a

donation for the fit commemoration for ever of his anniversary. The munificence of numerous other generous persons contributed to the extensive possessions the house in time acquired, and numerous privileges and immunities were bestowed by royal favour. Hen. II. gave the monks free warren, court-leet, felon's goods, and the right to judge in their own court thieves caught within their fee or any dwelling therein arrested for felony elsewhere, and freed them from service to the county or hundred court, from toll and other crown customs. Rich. I. also excused them from toll, and from the maintenance of highways and bridges. Hen. III. decreed their immunity from fine for murder committed within their liberties. At the Abbey gate, every Maundy Thursday a constitutional delivery to the poor was made of four shillings and eight pence in money, as much bread as ten quarters of rye would make, as much beer as three quarters of malt would yield, and three hundred herrings. The seal of the chapter, an interesting armorial instance, is that illustrated in correspondence with this note from an impression which is complete but indistinct in places. The design conveys two trefoiled canopies supported by slender pillars, that on the left containing a full-length representation of the B. Virgin, crowned and supporting the Holy Infant, that on the right, also at full length, the figure of an Abbot vested for mass with staff and book, probably intended for S. Robert, who A.D. 1098 founded the order at Citeaux. In the field, which is diapered, on either side of the arcading is a tree, and in the base the Abbey arms (those of England) three lions passant guardant, in chief a label of five points, supported by lions.

SIGILL' · COMVNE · CAPITVLI · MONACHOR · DE · C$\overline{\text{V}}$BA.

Although our illustration suffers obviously from the occasional want of clearness denoted in the impression, it is sufficiently lucid to evince the scheme of the seal to have been beautiful in its perception, happy in its execution, and artistic in its realization. The draping and pose of the figures are excellent, that of the Virgin, with its studied labouring under the weight of the sacred burden, being particularly admirable. The entire detail—for example, the Abbot's staff—was introduced with minuteness and care. In the shield we have the charges treated in that quaint and delightful spirit which modern heralds find so difficult, if not impossible, to emulate. By this graceful and devotional instance the contemporary excellence of the art its contrivance involved is largely manifested. The cloisters referred to which remain are Norman. After the Dissolution, when the house contained fourteen monks, the site was granted by Ed. VI. to the Earl of Warwick. Upon his execution it passed to Robert Kelway with whose daughter it came to Lord Harrington who built "Combe Abbey."

COMBWELL, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary Magdalene, co. Kent.

PLATE II. Seal 3.

A small house, founded it is said as an Abbey and reduced in consequence of its great poverty, which disallowed the state of an Abbot, to a Priory. The site chosen for its erection, anciently called Henlie, lies within the manor of Combwell, which is situate in the parish of Goudhurst formerly one of the seats of the Kentish woollen trade. There are now no architectural vestiges, but a farmhouse marks its precise location. Founded in the reign of Hen. II. by Robert de Turneham, who endowed with certain adjacent lands. In the generosity of a Lord Dacre it participated and because of this, according to Leland, he was esteemed the second founder. Never were its possessions extensive. In the reign of Rich. II. its annual revenue was returned at no more than sixty-seven pounds. The Prior paid homage to the Archbishop of Canterbury by whom he was installed. In lieu of induction fees, the Primate enjoyed the right to tarry two nights and one day and receive the while sufficient meat and drink. Hen. III. granted an annual fair on the feast and morrow of S. Mary Magdalene. The subject of the plate which relates to this note was the second and last seal of the Priory, supplied by a remarkably fine and lucid impression. According to the legend of the reverse it was contrived A.D. 1133, but than is an obvious anachronism. The nature of its art assigns it with more convincing probability to the century with which we are in this work primarily concerned. The design obversely presents an architectural elevation (doubtless intended for the Priory Church details of which it might supply), with a circular tower on either side, a large trefoiled arch in the centre, and two narrow windows and three apertures (one circular, the remaining trefoiled, each containing the head of a canon) in the pediment. Under the archway a graphic representation based upon the gospel of S. Luke (vii. 50) is depicted—our Lord seated at a banqueting table in the house of the Pharisee between two of His disciples (who are nimbussed), with Mary Magdalene beneath washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. Over the roof of the structure appears a star and crescent; on the edge of the table the inscription :—

MARIA : FIDES : TUA
TE : SALVAM : FECIT,

below, on the right, the demons who have been cast out of the Saint (Mark xvi. 91), and in the centre a small box of ointment, the emblem of the Magdalene.

✠SIGILL' ECCLESIE : SANCTE : MARIE : MAGDALENE : DE : CVMBWELL'.

PLATE II. SEAL 4. The reverse also exhibits a dramatic subject of the New Testament, one very popular with mediæval artists, and recorded in S. John's Gospel (xx. 17)—the *Noli me tangere.* Under a carved circular-headed arch, upheld by two clustered shafts with pinnacles, here our Lord is seen holding in the right Hand a long cross with banner flag, first appearing after the Resurrection in the Garden to S. Mary Magdalene, who, under two trees lies prostrate before Him. On each side of the field is a circular aperture which contains the head of a canon as on the obverse.

✠FACTVM : ANNO : GRATIE : M° : C° : XXX : TERCIO : MENSE : NOVEMBRI.

Both legends appear on raised rims. The singularly pictorial seal above described, at once original and unique, affords one of the more striking examples, not only of our class and period but of the whole domain of seal art. Nor is the measure of its interest less commensurate; in this it is equalled by few, excelled by none. Even to us, possessing some familiarity with the range of subject, its intensely graphic and realistic character and vivid eloquence comes as a revelation. Had the pictorial note it sounded been struck with more frequency the archæological and other values of seal remains would have been enlarged more than a thousandfold. The story of the Magdalene is both beautiful and touching; in its realization here it has not lost a shade of its beauty or pathos. The spirit which governs the relation of S. Luke and the other evangelists dominates in this. It is told with all the feeling that could be instilled into the finest sacred oratory, and we can recall no work upon canvas or in stone where the narrative is more fervent or artistic. In their perception both schemes are masterly, and in their execution wonderful dexterity is manifest. The architecture of the two displays unusual treatment; that on the obverse is pure and simple to a degree. But it is the figure studies which root our attention. Their disposition is in absolute harmony. Not a false line or curve is visible, on the contrary in their attitude and ordering high artistic excellence allied with fidelity to nature. It was not without intention that the figure of Christ rises in its proportions above the disciples. His features are in both presentments unhappily obscured by the state of the impression, as are partially those of the remaining figures but the perfect little head of the canon in the circular aperture of the pediment enlightens us, that as regards the artist capacity for facial drawing was his. The disciple on the right is intensely interested in the Divine confession

that "He is a friend to sinners not to maintain them in sin, but to forgive them their sins upon faith and repentance." When Jesus said "I have somewhat to say to thee," it is Simon, on the left who, troubled, saith "Master, say on," and after the parable, when asked which forgiven debtor would love his creditor the most answers perforce "I suppose that *he* to whom the most was forgiven." The only weakness apparent is the figure of the Magdalene in the first scheme, but her delineation in the second compensates. She was weeping disconsolately in the Garden. A voice arrests her ear, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? and she supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself and saith unto him . . . . Master"—this is the moment of the picture our artist has so feelingly narrated here. The *abandon* and emotion thrown into the prostrate figure are altogether praiseworthy. Throughout, the vestures are irreproachable. Of the figures the finest is certainly that of Christ in the Garden. Besides its other merits, the anatomical detail of the part uncovered is distinctly good. The spread of the banquet table is quite convincing, whilst the trees, which are conventional, possess a grace of their own. Even if we ignore the restrictions of the art, and mentally concede it every freedom we are unable to regard this seal otherwise than as a magnificent work of art; if we recall the one and dismiss the other, to esteem it as an extraordinary one.

As one of those houses whose revenues did not amount to the clear annual value of £200, Combwell Priory was suppressed in the 27th of Hen. VIII.

COVERHAM, Premonstratensian Abbey, co. York.

PLATE XXIII.

Seal 45.

An interesting house of the North Riding erected near the one-arched bridge which spans the river Cover. Substantial remains indicate exactly the situation. Whilst it held the dignity of an Abbey its possessions were too few to easily support it. So great was its poverty in the fourteenth century that dissolution threatened it. The foundation was first instituted at Swainby in the parish of Pickhall, towards the end of the reign of Hen. II., by Helewisia, daughter of Ranulph de Glanvill (the great Lord Chief Justice of England) and widow of Robert FitzRanulph, Lord of Middleham (who built the Norman portions of Middleham Castle), and

provided for by her. Other grants followed, Hen. II. confirming all up to his time. After a residence of over twenty years at Swainby, the canons in the reign of King John were removed hither by Ralph FitzRobert, Lord of Middleham, son of the foundress, who at the same time conveyed to them considerable lands and the Church of Coverham. Ralph FitzRobert caused his mother's remains to be interred within the new foundation, and was himself afterwards buried there. According to a charter granted by Ed. II. the monastery was destroyed by the Scots, and it was this calamity which wrought its destitution. Its fortunes, however, revived and permitted of its continuation for three centuries longer. A fine impression enables us to afford a good view of the character and merits of the Abbey seal. The design comprehended, upon a diapered field with what may have been intended for a rose in each space, a canopy pinnacled and crocketted and upheld by slender shafts, under which an ecclesiastical figure is depicted standing upon a sculptured corbel, holding a staff with the crook outwards in the right hand and a book in the left. Outside the canopy, on either side, is the figure of a canon, that on the right standing, the corresponding one kneeling upon the platform, and over them a star and crescent respectively. Superficially the central figure would appear to have been intended for the Abbot, but the devotional attitude of the sinister canon rejects that view. Probably it was designed either for S. Augustine, or S. Norbert who founded the order upon his rule.

S' C̄OE : CAPITVLI : DE : COVERHAM.

Both beautiful and artistic is this little instance. But it is perhaps in the apprehension of the design rather than in the measure of pains bestowed upon the execution of detail that its claims to the latter description chiefly lie. The artist obviously aimed at richness and effect and succeeded, but in reaching the objective strict accuracy of drawing was regarded of less importance. In our criticism, however, we must not forget the extreme limitations of the field, nor the frequent dangers with which impressions were involved by relaxation of the wax. As regards the first reminder here, as frequently elsewhere, we are struck with the wealth of imagery which the engraver contrived to get within his space. The seal, even with the bordure, does not measure more in diameter than one inch and five-eights.

Three bays of the Church, in the Decorated style, and a gatehouse constitute the chief remains, but many other fragments are visible whilst all the foundations can be traced. Amidst the ruins are two cross-legged effigies which it has been suggested were designed for Robert FitzRanulph and his son the second founder.

CROXTON, Premonstratensian Abbey of S. John the Evangelist, co. Leicester.

PLATE XLVIII. Seal 96.

Another of the thirty-five houses following S. Norbert's interpretation of S. Augustine's rule which stood at the time of the Dissolution. It was erected about seven miles S.E. of Grantham, held a fair estate, and was the means of vesting a certain measure of fame in mediæval times Croxton-Keyrial (of the hundred of Framland) wherein it stood. In the time of Hen. II. it was founded, according to one account by William Porcarius de Linus, according to another by one Sir Andrew Lutterell, Knight. King John, to whom one of the Abbots was physician, became a benefactor and within the Church his bowels were interred. Annexed to the Abbey was a cell at Horneby, Lancs. In the reign of Ed. III. the superior house through fire was almost entirely destroyed, and by pestilence all the canons except the Abbot and Prior perished. In consequence of these calamities, because of the infirmity of the Abbot, and moreover because the lonely circumstances of the spot afforded no security for the money, the institution was exempted from collecting the tenth for the latter king. For a view of the seal employed by it we have to rely upon an impression which, although fine in the nature of things, is incomplete and has been rendered to some extent indistinct. The design comprehended within a beaded bordure the B. Virgin, nimbussed, seated on a carved bench-like throne, with the Holy Child, also nimbussed, sitting on the left knee, and with her feet resting upon an eagle (the symbol of the evangelical patron) reguardant, who has in its talons a scroll inscribed :—ioh'es.

[✠S]IGILL' : C̄OV̄ET' : S̄CI : IOH'IS : . . . . . DE : VALLE : DE : CROXT . . . . .

Although the subject of our illustration lacks sharpness of outline it is not necessary to have before us a more lucid impression of the seal to arrive at its artistic value. Criticism as applied to the delicacies of limning must in the circumstances be foregone, but a simple view of the scheme as presented is sufficient to induce us to hail it as an instance of monastic seal art devoutly conceived, cleverly wrought, and altogether beautiful. The disposition of the figures and the depiction of drapery indicate and emphasize careful drawing and graceful handling, whilst in the presentment of the symbolic bird we recognise that part-natural and part-conventional treatment of the various elements of zoology for which the mediæval artist was unsurpassed. Whether intentional or not it is obviously now impossible to determine, but in the association of the B. Virgin with the eagle, and the juxtaposition of the two figures there lies a significance either weighty or fanciful. In our Introduction (p. 23) we have briefly

demonstrated the extraordinary devotion experienced by people of the Middle Ages to the Mother of God, and the remarkable and far-reaching *cultus* to which it gave rise. To both, her presence in the scheme under examination testifies, and for it by placing her above the symbol of one of the Evangelists it would appear a conviction was expressed that the *apologia* was to be found in the Gospels. Premising, as we well may, there was some governing idea in the association and juxtaposition it is difficult to reach any other equally feasible conjecture.

CROYLAND, Benedictine Abbey of SS. Mary, Bartholomew, and Guthlac, co. Lincoln.

PLATE V.

SEAL 10.

ONE of the more illustrious of our destroyed monastic centres, endowed with singular privileges, and ranking in point of riches with the greater of them. Not the least of the fame it enjoyed was due to the hospitality and charity it exercised upon a truly gigantic scale. It was erected on an island in the east marshlands of the county. In it the town of Croyland (or Crowland) originated, and to it was beholden for an extended growth and importance in mediæval times. The Abbey sprang from a hermitage. In the reign of Cenred of Mercia, Guthlac, a young and noble warrior, abandoned arms for the cowl and sought solitude here. He erected a habitation and dwelt here for some years obtaining through his great sanctity prophetic and miraculous powers. In A.D. 709 Ceolred reached the throne of Mercia, and whilst he governed (A.D. 709-16) never ceased from persecuting his cousin Ethelbald who also aspired to the kingdom. In despair and for security the Earl fled to "Crowland," and sought consolation and counsel of Guthlac his confessor. Guthlac assured him of ultimate success, whereupon Ethelbald vowed that when this was realized he would build a monastery here. After he became seated on the throne Guthlac, who meanwhile had died, appeared to the King in a vision and reminded him of his promise. In fulfilment Ethelbald founded this Abbey, which was raised upon a foundation of piles demanded by the marshy character of the soil. He contributed towards its erection three hundred pounds in money, gave it one hundred pounds annually for ten years, and endowed with the whole island, parts of the adjacent marsh and two fisheries. In the Church the relics of S. Guthlac were enshrined. Upon the Abbey other Saxon monarchs dispensed great favours. Kenulph decreed that all pilgrims to the shrine of S. Guthlac, the miraculous fame of whose relics was great and wide, who returned

from Croyland with his mark upon their hoods should be ever freed from toll throughout the kingdom. Witlaf, King of Mercia, when pursued by Egbert was concealed by the monks ; in return for the protection shewn him, besides bestowing rich gifts, he gave the privilege of sanctuary within the five waters. The Abbey was assailed by the Danes. At their approach, concealing part of their treasure in a well, some of the monks fled to the woods, thirty remaining with the Abbot. After their arrival, the Northmen destroyed and plundered Church and Abbey, murdered the Abbot, and tortured and slew the rest. In A.D. 948 the monastery was rebuilt and re-endowed with all its ancient possessions and privileges, except sanctuary. Towards the close of the eleventh century it was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. Fifty years later it was again burnt and rebuilt in greater splendour. From thence it flourished, increasing in fame, wealth, and importance to the end, but anything like a summary even of its intermediate history is not here feasible. One of its most prized relics was the whip of S. Bartholomew which had been given with the psalter of S. Guthlac and other treasures by Pega his sister. The second seal of the house affords the subject of our illustration, derived from a fair impression. It displays, beneath a carved canopy resembling a Church and upon an arched footboard, the Apostle S. Bartholomew with book, handling the flagellum mentioned to S. Guthlac. Between the figures is seen a bush with a bird, one of the emblems of the latter, upon it. Both the whip and knife of S. Bartholomew figured in the Abbey arms.

SIGILL' COMMVNE ABBATIS ET CONVENTVS CROYLANDIE.

An effective, as well as graphic exemplification. Conceived with some vigour and, as far as the state of the impression reproduced enables us to conclude, executed with equal skill. The drawing of the venerable figure on the left particularly seems to have called forth a more strenuous effort on the part of the engraver. The figure, curiously, is somewhat Assyrian in effect. Croyland Abbey was not deliberately destroyed but left to decay. The Parliamentary war completed the havoc of time and neglect. Considerable vestiges of a beautiful and majestic character yet remain, illustrating the Norman and successive styles. Principally they comprise the western piers of the east part of the Church, and parts of nave and aisles. The north aisle of the nave has been restored and is now used parochially. It forms a very handsome building—with a low massive tower—which exhibits chiefly the later style of English architecture. The west front is highly ornate and contains various statues, including those of SS. Guthlac and Bartholomew and King Ethelbald.

DOVER, Benedictine Priory of SS. Mary and Martin, co. Kent.

PLATE IX. SEAL 17.

A ROYAL and splendid house of the highest antiquity—its origin being traditionally assigned to the Apostolic, and historically to the Augustinian conversion—rendered famous through its regal associations and connection with the renowned fortress and port, the highway to France, and with Christ Church Canterbury. Its site was on the western side of the market-place. According to legend, in the ancient castle supposed to have been founded either by Julius Cæsar or Claudius a chapel was raised for the use of early converts to Christianity. That a religious settlement thus aggregated continued without intermission until the arrival of S. Augustine is highly improbable. It is more certain that Eadbald, King of Kent, established before A.D. 640 within the fortess a society of secular canons which he endowed with prebends and privileges. About A.D. 696, Wightred, King of Kent, having erected a church in honor of S. Martin, and buildings for their reception without the castle removed the canons thither, reinvested them with their original liberties and possessions, and declared them free from all jurisdiction save regal and papal. Up to the time of the Confessor, when the town of Dover had reached a flourishing condition, the prebends were held in common. After the surrender of the castle the Conqueror appointed his brother Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, governor who separated them. In Domesday the names of the canons and particulars of their holdings are all set out. The possessions of the Priory becoming very extensive, at an early time the Archbishops of Canterbury felt a great desire to annex it to Christ Church, and A.D. 1130 (up to which time it had preserved its independence) Archbishop Corboil succeeded in obtaining it from Hen. I. for that purpose. He ejected the seculars, suppressed the house, and to replace it, in the next year laid the foundations of another without the walls in honor of SS. Mary and Martin. The Archbishop died before the new building was finished. His successor, Theobald, completed it and A.D. 1139 established therein a community under Benedictine rule with Asceline, the sacristan of Christ Church, as Prior. From thence until the Dissolution, although frequent disputes arose concerning jurisdiction and privilege, Dover Priory remained subordinate to that of Canterbury. In the reign of Rich. II. they were defined as separate establishments for revenue purposes, a relation preserved to the end. Counted amongst its Priors was Richard who succeeded S. Thomas á Becket in the chair of Canterbury. During the notorious contention at Westminster for archiepiscopal precedence, it was he who sat in the lap of York. In the time of

Hen. II., who principally built the castle as it stands, the Priory was in the enjoyment of the ancient tenth of herrings. This, with its possessions and a new tenth of the years fishery which the burgesses offered upon the altar, the King confirmed to it. It owned a valuable library and enjoyed considerable privileges which included assize of bread and beer, wreakage in the manor of Dale; pillory, tumbrell, and toll in S. Margaret's, and the remarkable prerogative that Mass should begin in the Priory Church before it was commenced in any other of the town. The Holy Sacrifice was delayed in all the rest until a bell signalled its commencement at S. Martin's. Of the house, the second seal constitutes the subject of our illustration, furnished by an imperfect and occasionally indistinct yet fine impression. It is of two parts, and the designs dually recount the legend of the patron, S. Martin of Tours, for particulars of which reference must be made to our Introduction (p. 25). The scheme of the obverse comprehends the first part of the story—the division of his cloak with the beggar. Within it is seen the Saint, nimbussed, astride a caparisoned horse (pacing on hilly ground around the base of which washes wavy water allusive of Dover's situation), cleaving his cloak, a part of which the attenuated form of a beggar who stands under an arched doorway with embattled parapet, raises his hands to receive. In the field occurs an increscent moon containing a star and a lustrous sun, and in the foreground what is apparently a roundle or stud enclosed in a circle apprehended to be a late addition or a defect in the matrix.

· SIGILL . . . . . SIE · SCI · MARTINI · DE · DOVORIA.

PLATE IX. SEAL 18.

THE reverse conveys the second part of the legend—S. Martin's vision the night following his charitable act. The scheme, in this instance much more ornate and detailed than the preceding, exhibits two architectural canopies, pinnacled and crocketed, one at the apex (the larger), the other on the sinister side of the field. Under the first the half-length and nimbussed figure of Christ is seen issuing from the clouds, holding the abandoned half of the Saint's cloak and raising his right in benediction, attended on either side by a censing angel also reduced in the figure. Lying at length upon a couch with an arched plinth and shrouded, is S. Martin, his head nimbussed and placed below the second canopy. On the right, corresponding in position with the last-named detail occur a chamber lamp and several ornaments—wheel, escallop, and trefoil—and below the couch a conventional flowering branch.

MARTINI · VES[TE ·] SVM · TECT[VS · P]AVPERE · TESTE :

The seal described, the design of which was transmitted from another also of the thirteenth century the use of which preceded it, is so instinctively charming and quaint as to almost repel cold criticism. An artist with unerring instinct but qualified skill often expresses his ideas with greater

truth and conviction than one in whom capacity is superior to mind. Of these two categories the artist responsible for the seal of Dover Priory belongs to the first; the effect of his work is that more common to it. There are certain obvious weaknesses, but where it fails is in execution, not in conception—in its expression, not in the imagination which inspired, or in the feeling with which it was conveyed. The legend itself is alive with poetry and beauty, reduced not one whit in its transmission to the mind of the artist—a mind which realized all it contained and delighted in it—nor in its articulation through the channel of his art. The natural division of the story was designedly followed in its narration, with the result that we have, as it were, its obverse and reverse, the committal of a praiseworthy action with its inevitable reward. In this respect our artist rose superior to some of his fellows who we find forced successive actions into one scene. As regards the joint design, in the restricted art of seal engraving—perhaps in others less circumscribed—it would be impossible to give a treatment of the subject more intensely artistic than that we find bestowed here. Of the secret of producing through a diminutive vehicle effects of large proportion, the designer was a master, as the vigorous and bold delineation of the horse and Saint upon the obverse reveals. The limitations of space he seems to have ignored; we lose sight of them too; forgetting the actual dimensions we appear to be studying objects of far greater size. Here and there the anatomy of the horse suffers through imperfect drawing, but the pose of the rider is all that we could have expected. It was not without intention that the beggar was presented in such great attenuation, but to emphasize the depth of his poverty, to reveal the horror of poverty, and therefore to heighten the merit of the act of charity involved. In poetry we find the equivalent of the figure in Shakespeare's apothecary. Upon the reverse, too, we see in action the secret we have alluded to as being at work in the obverse. We might look in vain through seal art, religious or civil, for a more homely, or curious illustration than that which the couched figure yields. From the elevation of the feet, in consequence of a shortness of the couch, we gather the artist was a realist as well as a visionary. The indistinctness of the impression forbids our estimating precisely the artistic merits of the saintly figure of the obverse and from a similar cause, beyond appraising highly their disposition and general effect, we are prevented from criticising those portrayed here. The covering which enshrouds S. Martin is excellently and naturally treated but the elimination of a few superfluous details would have greatly assisted the lucidity of the scheme. Of the more remarkable monastic seal examples this is assuredly one. And it is possible that a proper impression would enforce the conviction that a

higher skill was involved in its execution than we think is apparent from that illustrated. In interest it is quite unsurpassed.

The present architectural remains of the Priory comprise principally the great gateway, house refectory with campanile, and the large refectory for strangers, long used as a barn but now as a school-room of the College raised upon the site.

S. Mary's Hospital.

PLATE XXII. Seal 43.

A well endowed charity, also known as the *Maison Dieu*, or God's House. Erected as a resting place for strangers, pilgrims, and indigent persons early in the reign of Hen. III. by Hubert de Burgh, the famous Chief Justiciary of England who A.D. 1217 defeated the French fleet off Dover. Provision was made by the founder for the maintenance of a Master, brethren, and sisters, and for all such as should resort hither. Hen. III., to whom Earl Hubert assigned the patronage, built the chapel adjoining and was present at its consecration. Making it an especial object of his consideration he granted to it many charters. Here the Kings of England were accustomed to lodge on their way to and from the continent. To enumerate the several royal visits paid to Dover would fill a catalogue. It is safe to assume that each sovereign from the time of its erection until the sixteenth century tarried within its walls at some period or other. The little seal illustrated, from an impression of the original matrix which was found in the Hospital grounds, belonged to Robert Nunn an ecclesiastic upon the foundation. It is a late example and displays under a niche with double arch, supported by two pinnacled and crocketted pillars and surmounted by a group of Church-like structures, on the left a full-length representation of the B. Virgin carrying the Child, and on the right the kneeling figure of a monk turned towards her, and presenting a scroll inscribed :—MAT̄ D̄I MEMENTO. Between the figures two slipped roses occur one above the other, possibly alluding to the B. Virgin—*Rosa mystica.*

SIGILLVM · ROBERTI · NVNNI.

A quaint little instance this, devotional in its conception but with limited pretensions towards the artistic. As regards the architectural detail they reach no mean height, nevertheless ; the little Churches at the apex are admirably given as are the E.E. pillars. The very limited area was opposed to delicate limning, yet the figures are not without a grace which commends. An attempt was obviously made to render the features of the B. Virgin pleasant and sympathetic which, it is equally apparent,

ended somewhat grotesquely. In the little monkish figure the ludicrous element is not very distant.

Queen Mary converted the Hospital premises into an office for victualling the Navy. About seventy years since, the Corporation acquired and applied them to municipal uses which they still serve. The chapel is now the Session-house, the refectory the Town Hall. The structure is a handsome one. The fine stained glass (modern) of the W. window presents, with several royal characters, the figure of the renowned Chief Justice.

ELSTOW, or Helenstowe, Benedictine Abbey of the Holy Trinity, SS. Mary and Helena, co. Bedford.

PLATE XXIII.

Seal 46.

Anciently and popularly styled the "Abbey of Blessed Mary of Elstowe." It was in the tenure of nuns, owned a large estate, and lay distant about a mile and a half from Bedford. The once adjacent Church, a beautiful example of Norman architecture now employed parochically, indicates the site. Founded *c.* A.D. 1078 by a niece of the Conqueror—Judith, wife of Waltheof, Earl of Huntingdon, by whom it was endowed with divers fair lands. Under her, the Domesday instructs us the nuns held several hides. Its possessions became extended, to some extent through gifts made occasionally by parents who placed their daughters upon the foundation. Hen. II. annexed to it the Churches of Hiche and Westun. In the reign of Ed. I. we find the Abbess claiming immunity from all aids, geld, danegeld, assizes, and other obligations. The impression of the seal employed by the devout ladies of Elstow, here in illustration, has suffered at the edges by chipping, and throughout by pressure. In design it comprises, supported by pinnacled pillars, a double-arched niche from the centre of which rises a pinnacled tower, with tabernacle work slanting towards and reaching the supports. The niche on the left is occupied by the crowned and seated figure of the B. Virgin (the second person of the triune dedication) holding (perhaps suckling) the Infant Jesus, nimbussed, upon her left knee. In the space on the right appears the full-length representation of S. Helena (the final dedicatory) crowned, holding in one hand a long Cross rudely shaped, and a book in the other. The platform upon which the figures stand is raised in the centre semi-circularly, to admit of a trefoiled cavity which contains the Abbess, supporting her staff and attended by three nuns.

S' COMMVNE : C[APIT]VLI : SC̄E : [M]ARIE : DE : ELEYNESTOWE.

S. Helena (Flavia Julia) was the mother of the Great Constantine. In depicting her with the long Cross, allusion is made to the legend which attributes to her the finding of the Cross actually employed at the Crucifixion. Owing to the regrettable state of the impression we are thrust largely upon conjecture in regard to the skill involved in the contrivance of the original seal. The scheme is varied and rich, and shews in the designing the exercise of considerable fervour and beauty with an effect which is also perceptible. Not necessarily do these conditions imply the exercise of equivalent skill, but apparently the engraving—of the chief part at least—reached a high standard. There is much that suggests, and nothing that repudiates clever treatment. The little figures at the base are extremely ascetic in appearance.

A detached tower which stands N.W. of the Church is all that now remains of the domestic buildings of the "Abbey of Blessed Mary of Elstowe."

ELY, Benedictine Priory of SS. Mary, Peter, and Etheldreda, co. Cambridge.

PLATE III.

Seal 5.

An illustrious house of great antiquity, sanctity and wealth of which the famous Cathedral, rising majestically above the fens of the shire, is a glorious memory. The genesis of the foundation whose departed grandeur is thus so superbly commemorated, is vested with considerable interest and romance. It was erected for nuns by S. Etheldreda (the daughter of Anna, who from A.D. 635 justly ruled East Anglia, and Hereswitha, a sister of the renowned S. Hilda), who became the first Abbess. At an early age Etheldreda had expressed a great desire for a religious life. Hence it was unwillingly she, when still a child, became espoused to Tonberht, a nobleman of East Anglia. Preserving her maidenhood to the last, Tonberht's death released her from a state she disliked. Her widowhood was being spent in retreat, when as a matter of political expediency she was again coerced into unwilling wedlock with Ecgfrid, son of Oswiu of Northumbria, but to her death she victoriously guarded her virginity. After Ecgfrid came to the throne, convinced that his spouse was resolved to die a maiden he unwillingly consented to her abandoning the court for a religious house at Coldingham of which S. Ebba, the King's aunt, was Abbess. There she was professed by S. Wilfrid. Repenting of his acquiescence in her departure, Ecgfrid strived to induce the return of his consort. But vainly. Infuriated at length by her persistent refusal, he resolved to enforce it, and Etheldreda,

with the island of Ely (the "morning gift" of her first husband) in mind, sought freedom in flight. With two attendant virgins she succeeded in reaching here without arrest notwithstanding that the King was in close pursuit. Here she stayed without further molestation, and *c.* A.D. 673 commenced the erection of a conventual establishment, in honour of the B. Virgin, upon which she settled the whole of the island, the cost of which was mainly borne by her brother Adulfus, King of East Anglia, and of which, as already stated, she became Abbess. The life of the Saint was characterized by an austerity and piety so great as to prepossess the choice of a like career by persons of equal and noble rank who placed themselves beneath her control. During her rule, her eldest sister Sexburga, widow of K. Erconbert of Kent; Ermenilda, daughter of Sexburga and dowager Q. of Mercia; and Werburga, daughter of Q. Ermenhilda, were all within the Abbey. Sexburga succeeded Etheldreda in the Abbacy, and was in turn followed by Ermenilda and Werburga. For almost two centuries, as originally constituted, the house flourished and acquired great repute for sanctity. In A.D. 870 it was destroyed by the Danes. A century later it was restored by Ethelwold, Bishop of Winchester, for Benedictine monks at the instance of K. Edgar who assigned the island to them. The first Abbot was Brithnoth, Prior of Winchester, who was considered to have been assassinated by Elfrida, Edgar's queen. Archbishop Stigand, A.D. 1065, assumed authority over the house and bestowed the Abbacy upon Thurstan, from whose death A.D. 1072 until the appointment of Richard, a renowned scholar of the Norman Abbey of Bec (the last Abbot), the office was regularly filled. Over Ely Abbey the Bishops of Lincoln had always exercised episcopal jurisdiction and when Richard was elected Bishop Robert urged his prerogative of investiture. Such compliance was nauseous to the elect and he objected. Doggedly he refused to yield whilst the Bishop as resolutely insisted. At length Hen. I., annoyed at the Abbot's contumacy, demanded his crozier and bereaved him. Richard argued his cause before Pope Paschal who decreed his restoration and upon his return to England he propitiated the King. Enjoying thenceforward his favour he presssed Henry to raise Ely to a bishopric. Ultimately the consent of the Pope was obtained, and the Abbatial lands were divided between the episcopate and the monastery. For more than four hundred years afterwards, the monks remained in their island home governed by a Prior instead of an Abbot.

We are particularly fortunate in being able to reproduce the seal of the Chapter (a dual example) from a remarkably fine and almost perfect impression. Obversely, the design comprises a façade of three arches (each cusped upon the inside, the central with greater elaboration) supported by four pillars (the two inner fluted, all with capitals), surmounted by a

structure resembling a Cathedral and ornamented at the sides with tabernacle work, raised upon an arcade of narrow trefoiled arches. In the central niche stands at full-length S. Etheldreda, foundress and first Abbess, attired as an Abbess and crowned as Queen of Northumbria, holding in one hand a pastoral staff, and in the other an open book. That on the left is occupied by a representation of her first husband, Tonberht, depicted as a youth with a falcon rising from his wrist by the jesse; that on the right by another, of her second husband, K. Ecgfrid, crowned and with sceptre in the right hand. Over the canopy are two angels descending from heaven, each swinging a censer.

: SIGILLVM : CAPITVLI : ECCL'IE : SC̄E : ETHELDREDE DE ELY.

PLATE III. Seal 6.

The reverse also exhibits a facade of three niches, which closely resembles in its architecture and elaboration that on the obverse, but there are differences in the tabernacle work at the sides. The central niche is here occupied by the full-length figure of S. Peter (who was also a patron), nimbussed, with keys and book, and the others by that of Bishop Ethelwold (the restorer at the instance of K. Edgar), vested and mitred as a prelate, and the B. Virgin (the chief patron) crowned, and with sceptre and book. Under the platform upon which the main scheme rests and within an arch with arcaded sides, is a boat with several persons in it riding on waves. This boat appears in a doubtful sense. It may only indicate the topographical peculiarity of Ely, illustrate a well-known scriptural incident, or the flight of S. Etheldreda; or again, it might have been introduced in a metaphorical sense to represent the Church under one of its titles. After the battle of Hastings, Archbishop Stigand, with many notable ecclesiastics, the Earl of Leicester and other nobles, together with a confederacy numbering a thousand, fled hither, garrisoned Ely and with Hereward the Wake held it for several years against the Conqueror; possibly it was intended to recall this historic incident.

: S' SC̄I : PETRI : ET SC̄E : ETHELDRIDE : VIRGINIS : ET REGINE.

When impressions from the obverse and reverse were united, on the edge appeared the following rhyming distich:—

PETRVS : ETELDREDA : MOLLIS : SVB : TEGMINE : CERE : ELY : SECRETA : CELARE : SIMVL : STATVERE :

Of its order, and any period the capitular example immediately described was a consummate one. Conceived in all the intensity of Gothic consciousness, it was magnificently designed and most exquisitely wrought. Viewed from the highest standpoint of art, it is surpassed by the obverse of the seal of Merton and the seal of Heyninges Priories, the

devotional sensibility of both of which it also lacked. Those instances, however, are superlative ; were they absent, this seal of Ely of itself would loudly acclaim the capacity of mediæval seal art for very lofty expression and bear to the truth of that voice the strongest and most convincing testimony. Outside the realm of seals, excepting architecture, it would be difficult if not impossible to adduce a work of human contrivance of its century in which its beauty was exceeded. Its creater enjoyed in a remarkable degree the artistic temperament and possessed in the same measure, not only the skill to convey his ideas ably through the channel of his art, but the patience and industry to express them with scrupulous precision. If we scan the architectural detail alone, we cannot be but forcibly struck with the grandeur and extraordinary minuteness in which it is presented—if comparatively, we find it in seal art unsurpassed, if not unparalleled. It is, altogether, true to scale and most ornately elaborated. The grace and delicacy of Gothic architecture is sometimes subordinated in the view by reason of its proportions. In the reductions here we have a telling revelation that structures of this character are instinct and alive with both. The six figures vary somewhat in merit. As regards the features, in most instances we have to deplore impressional defects which obviate a complete appreciation. Those of K. Ecgfrid—the figure on the left-hand of the obverse—however, are quite distinct. In this case they are faultlessly delineated, and if it is too much for us to say their execution characterized that of the remaining figures, at least they prove the artist's aptitude in this direction. The pose of all, in six-fold variation since no two agree, is natural and altogether admirable whilst the costume, in style and depiction varying to the same extent, is presented in a fashion at once artistic and handsome. Nor can less than this be said of the little censing angels, nor than that as a whole the seal is a thing of real beauty. The falcon rising from the wrist of S. Etheldreda's first husband curiously recalls a popular pursuit of our ancestors, and the little boat enlightens us somewhat as to the style of their water craft.

PLATE XLVII.

Seal 93.

The Priory contributes to our selected group another example of this art, namely, the seal *ad causas*, an illustration of which is furnished by a chipped but fine impression. It displays S. Etheldreda, crowned as Queen, holding a pastoral staff and book, similarly as on the obverse of the Chapter seal, and standing on a sculptured corbel.

[✠ SIG]I[LLV]M : PRIORIS : ET : CONVENTVS : ELYENSIVM : AD : CAVS[AS].

This instance, archaic in type, affords a bold and strenuous one, one

in which the effect of a larger ratio than the actual is secured. With that of the capitular, the art of the *ad causus* seal may not be compared but the figure was obviously properly modelled, ordered, and apparrelled. The features are too obscured to allow of examination, but the regulation of the draping displays skilled manipulation. Of its style, the seal of Lanercost Priory may perhaps be adduced as a superior example, but this is unquestionably artistic.

Hen. VIII. granted a charter for erecting the Cathedral Church of the monastery into the Cathedral Church of the Holy Trinity. He bestowed upon it a portion of the monastic revenues and converted the last Prior, an unworthy ecclesiastic, into the first Dean of the new foundation. The Cathedral was not completed until the sixteenth century. It was dedicated to SS. Mary, Peter, and Etheldreda, A.D. 1252. Now the site of the Priory is occupied by the Bishop's Palace and houses of the prebendaries.

EVESHAM, Benedictine Abbey of SS. Mary and Ecgwine, co. Worcester.

PLATE VIII. SEAL 15.

A MAJESTIC house which held exalted rank and rivalled in influence the episcopate of Worcester, charmingly situated in the lovely vale of Avon. It possessed an immense estate (including at one time no less it is supposed than twenty-two towns), rich prerogatives, a sumptuous Church (containing one hundred and sixty-four gilt pillars and sixteen altars), and a stately pile of domestic buildings. The head of the house—in which the town originated—sat as a spiritual baron in Parliament. Near the Abbey, in A.D. 1265, was fought one of the most noteworthy and determined battles recorded in English history—the decisive struggle between Simon de Montfort, the great Earl of Leicester, who led the insurgent barons and was slain, and the forces of Hen. III. (quartered at the time in the Abbey) under Prince Edward, afterwards Ed. I. Within its walls the fugitives of the field were massacred, and the Earls of Leicester and Lancaster with others interred. In the legendary circumstance which incited the foundation of the Abbey the etymology of Evesham is curiously implicated. Ecgwine, a prince of royal blood, had succeeded A.D. 692 to the see of Worcester, but being dispossessed by the Pope he retired hither. In his service was a swineherd named Eoves, to whom the B. Virgin one day appeared. He reported the vision to the Bishop, who at once made for the spot, when the B. Virgin re-appeared and commanded

Ecgwine to erect a Benedictine monastery on a spot she indicated. Later, it was popularly supposed that the place derived its name of "Eovesholme," or "Eovesham," from that of the swineherd, but the title is learnedly held to denote a flat dwelling-place by a riverside. Ecgwine procured a gift of the land from Ethelred of Mercia, and A.D. 702 began, as directed in the vision, the erection of the house, in honour of the B. Virgin, of which he became the first Abbot. Kenred of Mercia and Offa of East Anglia co-operated in granting him sixty-five manses lying on both sides of the river and, accompanied by both (they to lay down their crowns and embrace monasticism), in A.D. 709 he journeyed to Rome and obtained from Pope Constantine special privileges for his foundation. It was consecrated A.D. 712. Two years after, Ecgwine endowed it by charter with all the property he had received on account of it, which then amounted to one hundred and twenty manses. In time the Abbey attained great repute as a school of learning. It was ravaged by the Danes, but restored during the reign of King Athelstan by Bishop Kinewold who introduced seculars, afterwards replaced by monks by Oswald, who succeeded Dunstan (the successor of Kinewold) in the bishopric of Worcester, A.D. 961. In the time of Aldulf, Oswald's successor, the Abbey was made subject to the See. From the episcopate of Wulfstan, who followed Aldulf, the commencement of the Abbey's greatness dates. The Confessor appointed to the Abbacy Egilwin, who increased the number of monks; he subsequently became a favourite with both Harold and the Conqueror, by whom he was entrusted with important offices. Soon after the Conquest, Walter, the Abbot, commenced the erection of a new Church in the dedication of which S. Ecgwine was joined. Rufus sent twelve of the monks to Denmark to establish a Priory there. The use of mitre, gloves, ring and other insignia was granted the Abbot by Pope Clement III. At a diocesan synod we find him urging his claim to wear a mitre and sit next to the prelate. During the episcopate of Walter Cantilupe (A.D. 1237-1266) the monks regained their independence which they had by degrees asserted. Whilst a pestilence raged in the middle of the fourteenth century the Abbey became almost depopulated. The monastery of Alcester was annexed in the reign of Ed. IV.

The corporate seal of the house was a dual one. As our illustration, which is taken from a very good impression, reveals, its design was highly complicated and not altogether coherent. The obverse relates the legend which incited the foundation. Rising from the base and past the centre is a wide scroll, with a lancet-shaped cusp at the top and curves at the sides, forming a trefoiled configuration in which is seen the swineherd standing, with face to the right and feet to the left, between two oak trees, leaning on a staff and tending a sow, which suckles a pig. A similar

animal is visible on the other side. Upon the scroll is inscribed the following old English rhyme :—

✠ EOVES · HER · WONEDE · ANT · W[AS · SWON ·]
[FOR] · PI · MEN · CLEPET · ÞIS · EOVISHOM.

which may be interpreted :—

Eoves here wended with his swine
Egwin named this Eovishom.

Above the trefoil appears a representation of the Abbey Church, here depicted with tall spire or central tower (each gable having a cross finial), with a cinquefoil perhaps intended for the sun over the roof-line, on the right hand. Immediately below the building is the legend :—

ECCE LOC⁹ QVĒ ELEGI

i.e., *Ecce locum quem elegi*—"Behold the place which I have chosen." On either side of the field upon a level with the Church are two niches, one plain, the other trefoiled. Those on the left contain a full-length representation of the B. Virgin (crowned, carrying a long cross and attended by two figures—a man attired in a cloak and woman with a book) appearing to S. Ecgwine, who, in the first of the dexter arches, kneels before her and to whom the words last quoted are addressed. In the trefoiled arch on the right and under a tree the Virgin is seated with her feet resting upon a platform, appearing in a vision to the swineherd who looks up from below. Over the head of S. Ecgwine is a *fleur-de-lis*, over that of the Virgin a cinquefoil, and on either side of the trefoil shape a tree.

SIGILLVM · SANCTE · MARI[E . ET SANTI · ECGWINI · ĒPI ·
E]OVESHAMENSIS · MONASTER[II ·]

PLATE VIII.

SEAL 16.

THE reverse conveys in brief the erection, dedication, and original endowment of the Abbey. If anything, the design is more complicated than the preceding. It presents at the apex on the left hand side, a distinct Gothic niche with cusped arch in which is enthroned the chief patroness, with the Holy Child on the left knee. On the right S. Ecgwine, vested and mitred as a Bishop, kneels towards and presents her with a model of the Church, here represented with a tall spire in the centre and a tower or turret at each side, a cross finial on both, and a flag on the right. On the left and right hand sides of the figures is an oak tree, allusive of acorns from which the swine derived sustenance ; over the Church a sixfoiled rose ; on the sinister side two *fleurs-de-lis*, and on the right, one. This constitutes the first part of the picture which is divided from the second by a row of pointed and trefoiled arches, two large in size and crocketted with oak leaves. On the left, seated, are the three royal patrons, Kenred of Mercia, Offa of East Anglia, and Ethelred of Mercia, the first with a falcon on his wrist, the second supporting a sceptre fleury, the third inclining to the

right, and presenting a charter, surmounted by a *fleur-de-lis*, inscribed :—

DAMVS—REGIE—LIBER—TATI,

and authenticated (somewhat anomalously, but in curious affinity with the subject of this work) by a large oval seal bearing the arms of England, three lions passant guardant, to Bishop Ecgwine, mitred, who kneels on the right to receive it. The latter is attended by his chaplain, who raises one hand and holds a book in the other.

DICTI[S ·] ECGWI[NI · DANT ·] REGE[S · MVNERA · TRINI ·] [OMNIBVS · VNDE · PI]E · NITET · AVLA · SACRATA · MARIE.

The virtues of this unusually graphic seal obviously incline towards the curious and quaint rather than to the artistic. But what it loses artistically upon comparison, is more than recompensed by its extraordinary interest. In this regard we should find a difficulty in advancing an instance which excelled it. Of the strict canons of art the contriver was manifestly independent, and he suffered from lack of skill. His talents were literary rather than artistic. He set out to narrate a long story within a very meagre space and succeeded, incidentally achieving a not inharmonious, if complicated, disposition he can scarce be said to have aimed at. Though crude the work is not altogether lacking in merit. The treatment of the Virgin and Child upon the reverse has much to commend it. All that now remains of this one glorious pile is an arch or gateway lying on the north side of the existing Churchyard, and a few inconsequent fragments. In the end the B. Virgin's mission to S. Ecgwine proved a vain one.

FAVERSHAM, Benedictine Abbey of S. Saviour, co. Kent.

PLATE XI. Seal 21.

A HOUSE of some early celebrity, once vested with many privileges and a considerable estate which became much reduced. It stood not far away from the Church of the parish which the monks are said to have employed upon the greater festivals. The main portions of the structure were demolished soon after the suppression. In the early years of the nineteenth century, ruins of two gatehouses were to be seen and in a farm-house parts of the chapel and porter's lodge identified. Now its remains comprise but a few of the outer walls. The Abbey was founded by K. Stephen and his consort Maud, who (A.D. 1147) munificently endowed it with the manor of Faversham and other property. Of the Cluniac order Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester and brother of the

King, was an especial patron and probably in deference to him the new foundation was assigned it, monks being drawn from Bermondsey Priory to occupy the Abbey. In the erection the Queen expressed particular interest, and often personally superintended the building operations. A relic of the Holy Cross, sent him by Godfrey de Bouillon, was placed by the King in the Church where both he and Maud, as well as her son Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, and other renowned persons, were interred. Hen. II. granted an annual fair of eight days which commenced on the feast of S. Peter *ad Vincula*. Isabel, sister of Hen. III., came here with a large suite as she passed to the continent to become the spouse of the Emperor Frederick. Edward I. granted free warren within the manor; Hen. IV. a fishery. In the reign of Ed. I. the Benedictine rule was instituted. At that time the Abbey had not only reached a condition of extreme poverty but become heavily involved. So the King placed its estate during his pleasure in the hands of trustees, with authority to maintain the monks and minister their income until they were freed from debt. The Abbot sat in thirteen Parliaments during this, and in the reign of Ed. II., but not after the eighteenth year of the latter. Upon the death of each Abbot, the King (as founder) claimed his ring, drinking vessel, palfrey, and kennel of hounds in lieu of other heriot. The poverty of the house necessitated the strict enforcement of certain rights (namely, compensation for swine pasturage, tolls on goods sold in the market and beer brewed) upon the inhabitants of the town, which engendered between them and the monks relations not altogether to be defined as amicable.

We have chosen for reproduction here, first, the corporate seal of the foundation. It was composed of two parts and the second example of its class to be employed. Although a part of the impression illustrated is missing from the top and its detail suffers a little from want of clearness, it is nevertheless a fine one. The obverse displays, between two narrow buttresses (each with three arcaded storeys and supported by brackets) three pointed arches (carved and trefoiled upon the inside and crocketted without), those on the right and left separated from the central, which is the largest, by sculptured piers. Against a diapered field, the central arcade contains a representation of Our Lord (S. Saviour), nimbussed and enthroned, who raises the right hand in blessing and holds in the left a book of the Gospels. In the niche upon the sinister side S. Peter, with keys and book, is enthroned and in that on the dexter S. Paul, with sword and book, is disposed in correspondence. Over the top of the chief a star and crescent appeared, and in the base, placed against an architectural terrace, two panels which contained two crowned heads probably designed for K. Stephen and his queen, Maud.

[S' C]OMMVNE : MONASTERII : SCI : SALVATORIS : DE : FFAVER . . . . .

PLATE XI. Seal 22.

The reverse primarily conveys an elevation, in part section, of a more or less conventional representation of the Abbey Church, shewn with central and two side towers. Above the roof, between the spires, two angels are seen descending from Heaven and swinging censers. In chief, the sectioned parts of the structure contain the Transfiguration. Immediately beneath the central tower, above the roof-line, is a trefoiled arch and on either side, below the roof, another similar in style ; the three contain respectively, Our Lord standing upon a mount and Moses and Elias both at full length. A quatrefoil and sixfoil in each of the side towers, disposed one above the other at the top and base, exhaust the sectioned detail. These contain the heads of the emblems of the four Evangelists ; on the left, those of SS. John and Matthew (eagle and lion) ; on the right, those of SS. Matthew and Luke (angel and calf). Below the building are seen three crouching figures described by Dr. Birch as :—Judas, Arius, and Julian the Apostate. (?)

✠TRANSFIGVRATVR : VELUT : ET : SOL : CLARIFICATUR.

A magnificent example is that proffered by the seal described. Without question it is a striking work of art and, since exhaustive research has failed to reveal the Transfiguration elsewhere upon a seal, it is probably unique also. Both schemes were well conceived. The harmony of their arrangement is perfect and their effect is of a richness which does not in the least satitate or detract, but characterizes. Of the art with which we are concerned, the designers of the seals of Merton and Heyninges Priories were superlatively masters. They idealized it and in it stand out as conspicuously as Fra Angelico and Raphael do in painting. Next to them—although the distance which intervened was great—followed a wider class of artist, whose work (the style of which is well manifested in our plates) though excellent, never attained ideal heights. In this category, capable of much sub-division, the artist responsible for the seal under examination is entitled to a place. A precise estimate of his capacity for facial drawing is largely barred by the state of the impression. In the features of Christ there is an evident crudity, but those of S. Peter to an extent belie a lack of skill in this direction. But in the portrayal of the figure and depiction of drapery his ability was unquestioned—his graver was as unerring as his eye. Nor can less be said of his capacity for architectural drawing ; abundant testimony to this is supplied by the chastely-worked arcade of the obverse and the rich and precise detail of the reverse. The seal was a creation of a Gothic noon-day.

PLATE XLVI. SEAL 92.

THE second example contributed by Faversham Abbey to our series is taken from an impression, chipped on the right hand side but otherwise well preserved, of the seal of Peter who was Abbot A.D. 1244-66. It is rendered curious by the sinking of two quatrefoil panels on each side of the field, much more deeply than the rest of the work—a very unusual feature. The scheme presents the Abbot, with staff and book, standing upon a pedestal against a field diapered lozengy, whilst in each of the panels referred to occurs the head of a saint.

✠SIGILL . . . . . ABBATIS : DE : FAVERSHAM.

A commendable specimen only, which follows the earlier style of its order. The Abbot's vestments are well regulated and drawn, but the figure offends considerably against truthful modelling, whilst the features exhibit but minor skill in their chiselling. One of the four heads only can be said to be at all lucid. In its portrayal some aptitude is evident. Superior examples of this class will be found amongst the Canterbury group. When Convocation met in A.D. 1529, to express its views concerning the validity of the King's marriage with Queen Catharine, the Abbot voted, by proxy, that "to marry the wife known by the brother departing without issue was prohibited by the Divine law and indispensable by the Pope." When his Abbey was threatened he vainly wrote a letter of remonstrance to Cromwell, but his surrender was enforced.

FLIXTON, Augustinian Priory of SS. Mary and Catharine, co. Suffolk.

PLATE XVII. SEAL 33.

A SMALL house erected for religious women which never attained to a position of any importance or exercised any particular influence. It stood one mile south of the parish Church, the rectory of which it obtained by exchange in the fourteenth century. Founded *c.* A.D. 1258 by Margery, Baroness Creyk, who limited the number of nuns to eighteen besides a Prioress. A century later Bishop Bateman framed the statutes under which it was subsequently governed. Among those who increased its possessions were Henry de Bosco A.D. 1268, Roger FitzPeter FitzOsbert and his wife Sarah A.D. 1285, John, Bishop of Norwich, A.D. 1321, Bishop Bateman A.D. 1350, and Bishop Lyhert A.D. 1472. The house was dissolved A.D. 1528 by the Bull of Clement VII. Our illustration of the Priory seal—which probably originated about the time of the foundation—is served by a very imperfect impression. Its form was

that of a lozenge having four semi-circular lobes, and its design comprised the Crucifixion between SS. Mary and John. In the four lobes were placed respectively the emblems of the Evangelists, under a round arch in the base an *Agnus Dei* looking up to the Cross and in the field the sun and moon depicted with faces. The arms of the Abbey displayed a S. Catharine's wheel with a Calvary cross projecting from it in chief.

. . . . . PITVLI MONIALIV̄ DE FLIXT . . . . .

The peculiar but graceful configuration of this little instance possibly marks it as unique, and its subject, only occasionally encountered in seal art, as rare. The design is most effective, the conditions of shape being cleverly met. Its execution exhibits considerable care and adroitness, and quite an artistic result was achieved. Near an ancient farm house, and encircled by a moat, some fragments of the institution yet remain.

GLASTONBURY, Benedictine Abbey of S. Mary, co. Somerset.

PLATE XV. Seal 29.

The most renowned, saintly and magnificent of all our destroyed conventual establishments—the realization of S. Dunstan's dream. Doubtless the most ancient Christian settlement, afterwards it became the grandest seat of monasticism in England. To other houses it served as a model. It was situated in one of the most beautiful and romantic spots, hallowed by exquisite legend, to be found in the kingdom—the "island valley of Avilion" where, according to tradition, Arthur "the blameless King" was brought and died. The grandeur of the ruins of its Churches still conveys some idea of its ancient glory. In value and authority it surpassed every house in England, save Westminster. The Abbot lived in a state of almost regal splendour (with an income of nearly £40,000 per annum), enjoyed countless privileges and immunities, held the title of lord, and sat in Parliament. To the sanctity of the house William of Malmesbury pays a beautiful tribute. Tradition relates that Joseph of Arithmathea with eleven followers arrived here *c.* A.D. 60 and built a Church in honour of the B. Virgin, supposed to have continued until the middle of the second century, when a society of anchorites settled near the spot and flourished until the fifth. One of the numerous S. Patricks (whether the "Apostle of the Irish" or not is questionable, though in mediæval times S. Patrick of Glastonbury was identified with him) was born in the neighbourhood. When ninety years of age he retired to his native place, assumed control of the anchorites, and made them confirm to a strict monastic rule. About

fifty years after his death (*c.* A.D. 546), from the "Rosy Vale" the "Apostle of the Welsh," the great S. David, reached here and it is said rebuilt the Church. Thus far tradition. In A.D. 601 the Damnonian King Gwrgan granted the monastery which then stood a charter. King Kentwine endowed it also, and in A.D. 708 Ina, King of Wessex (considered by some to have been the actual founder), showered upon it the fullest favour. He rebuilt the house upon more dignified lines, gave it valuable lands with unique privileges, and personally obtained of the Pope a Bull which afforded it his protection. Not long after it was ravaged by the Danes but speedily restored. Two centuries later, through the influence of S. Dunstan, the chief founder of English monasticism, its character was changed and its consequence and proportions widely enlarged. S. Dunstan was born near the Abbey, received his education there, and became its most renowned pupil. He passed thence to the famous monastery of Fleury where he became a Benedictine, and upon his appointment to the Abbacy of Glastonbury introduced here the rule he had embraced. His affection for the Abbey was intense. It is recorded that in his early years he saw it in a vision complete and majestic, and to make it both he was resolved. He obtained permission to draw upon the royal resources, began the work of rebuilding on a grand scale and procured from K. Edmund large estates and privileges in its behalf. When at the height of his power, as Archbishop of Canterbury and Papal legate leading the ecclesiastical and political affairs of the state, he had it still in mind and obtained for it even greater riches and privileges. To its greatness and sanctity the attention of all Christendom was now drawn. Pilgrims made it their objective and burial within its precincts was much coveted. The Conqueror perfidiously bereft it of many lands, some of which he afterwards restored. The greater portion of the Abbey, with the Church, was destroyed by fire A.D. 1184, whereupon Hen. II. decreed their re-erection in the fullest magnificence. In his reign, a coffin reputed to be Arthur's was discovered and venerated as such. Savaric, Bishop of Bath and Wells, A.D. 1192-1205 (see Bath p. 31), translated his seat hither and assumed the title of Bishop of Glastonbury, but the Abbey did not long retain the episcopal chair. Until his time, the Abbot enjoyed precedence of all kindred ecclesiastics in England, but Pope Adrian IV. (Nicholas Brakespere) transferred that dignity to S. Albans, where he had been educated. The rebuilding was not entirely completed until about the reign of Ed. III. From thence it continued to flourish in all its greatness until the Dissolution, when its sanctity, it is historically proven, was never more profound or its reputation more spotless. The brutal murder of its venerable Abbot—a scholar, a gentleman and a saint, who innocent of any charge was treated and hung as a malefactor—was

one of the darkest and most unpardonable crimes the turmoil of the Reformation evoked.

An impression, somewhat worn and a little chipped but upon the whole fine, enables us to afford an excellent view of the Abbey seal, which was of two parts. The design of the obverse comprehends an architectural façade of three niches, each minutely carved and elaborated and surmounted by a square tower with spire, pinnacles, and crockets, supported by four pillars rising from a platform. In the central, which is the larger, stands the B. Virgin, crowned, holding in her right hand a branch of the Holy Thorn, in her left the Divine Infant lifting His right hand in benediction. That on the dexter side contains a representation of S. Margaret, also crowned and standing, piercing with a long Cross the head of a dragon which lies at her feet; that on the sinister S. Catharine, also crowned and standing, with a sword in her right hand, a wheel in the left. A plinth below the façade indicates by name the Saints intended. On each side, in the field, occurs a *fleur-de-lis* (symbolic of the Virgin's purity) and beneath the plinth a series of three arches, the central of which contains the Abbey Church and those at the sides each a reguardant bird. The B. Virgin was the chief and original patron of the Church. The thorn branch carried by her draws attention to a most interesting local tradition. Upon "Weary-all-Hill" (so-called, legend states, because he and his companions weary from their journey sat there and rested) south-west of the town, S. Joseph struck his staff, a hawthorn stick, into the ground, whereupon it took root and afterwards constantly blossomed "at Christmas mindful of Our Lord." This famous thorn had two trunks, one of which was destroyed as superstitious, *temp.* Elizabeth, the other during the Rebellion. It has now quite vanished from its site, but there are trees originally derived from the old stock still thriving in many local gardens. Curiously enough, there is no doubt that these thorns do blossom about Christmas Day. The original was for a long time held sacred and was the centre of countless pilgrimages. Bristol merchants dried and exported the flowers which were considered miraculous. On one occasion, it is recorded, instead of blooming on the 25th December it flowered on the 5th January, a circumstance held by the people to prove the latter the true Christmas Day. They refused to celebrate it on the earlier, but with various villages around observed it upon the latter date. SS. Catharine and Margaret (whose legends in illustration of their emblems will be found in our Introduction (p. 25) were probably dedicatories of altars within the Churches of which there were two—S. Mary's (now called S. Joseph's) and SS. Peter and Paul's. Whether the birds appear in a symbolic or material sense is uncertain. If the former, the more probable, they may convey the guardianship of the

Church by the Holy Spirit, if the latter they possibly allude to the Holy Thorn.

TESTIS : ADEST : ISTI : SCRIP[TO : GEN]ETRIX : PIA : XP̄I GLASTONIE.

PLATE XV. Seal 30.

The scheme of the reverse also exhibits, between two roses occupying the same position in the field as the *fleurs-de-lis* upon the obverse, an architectural façade which, although less elaborated, responds in essentials to that of the latter. Here appears in the chief niche, standing, S. Dunstan, vested for mass and mitred, with the right hand raised in blessing, the left supporting a staff, and in the dexter and sinister SS. Benignus and Patrick respectively, both similarly attired, also blessing with one hand and with a staff in the other. The names of all these are inscribed on a plinth below, under which, as on the obverse, is a series of arches. The central arch is occupied by the representation of a humorous incident which, according to the "Golden Legend," first printed by Caxton, occurred here —S. Dunstan with a pair of red-hot tongs taking the devil by the nose! The subject depicted under the arch upon the left is uncertain; it is presumably an incident in the life of S. Benignus. That upon the right contains three fishes nainant counternaiant in allusion to S. Patrick's famous sermon to the denizens of the deep. The association of this Saint with Glastonbury has been defined. S. Benignus was a protegé of his who followed him, it is said, in the Abbacy. S. Patrick in the course of his mission once lodged with one Sesgnen who had a sweet and gentle son. S. Patrick baptized him "Benignus" (*i.e.* sweet). He became Bishop of Armagh, and retired here late in life.

CONFIRMANT : HAS : RES[IN ?]SCRIPTI : PONTIFICES : TRES.

It will be seen, the seal here described, although by no means the most exquisite of our examples, is one of intense beauty. The artist who called it into being realized to the uttermost the magnificence and glory of the house for whose use it was intended and, imbued with this perception, contrived that it should be a reflex of both—that those who viewed his work should say, without reference to the inscriptions, "This is the seal of Glastonbury Abbey"—and successfully. Intrinsically, it is of great interest; extrinsically this is excelled since it suggests so much of history and tradition. The schemes of both parts are not only artistic but highly so. The imagination which conceived them, had it so chosen, could have supplied us with more delightful legend than we should weary of the listening to. To its possessor art was not only akin to religion, a hand-maid of religion, but religion art and art religion. But to the height of his devotional ardour or his artistic ideals the sum of his

skill as a craftsman did not ascend, and in consequence what would otherwise have been a consummate work of art, of any time, descends to us at less than that. The discrepancy is obvious, yet, contrasting the weak with the strong points of the seal a perception is formed that the artist did not quite treat himself with fairness, that had he so striven he could have reached a much higher degree of perfection than was achieved. But that is theory, the seal fact, and even from the actual a high capacity of execution must be conceded him. The finest feature of the seal is indubitably its architectural ornament, the exquisite nature of which is most emphasized upon the obverse. Here, above the canopies, such a wealth of delicate embellishment reigns as to preclude, almost, our following it in detail. In its depiction a signally poetic idea was expressed. The work immediately above the figures was traced so as to resemble the interlacing of *thorns*—in allusion, of course, to the Holy Thorn. Some kinship for the idea is found in the legend which relates of S. Hilda, that at Whitby she transmitted multitudes of snakes into stones. Readers of Scott will recall reference to this in *Marmion*. Where our artist failed, was where his contemporaries in other arts failed—in the delineation of the figure. The curve which in the B. Virgin suggests weariness from supporting the burden of the Child, is over-studied and as far as we can see the pose of the saints in attendance have little to commend them, although that of the figures upon the reverse is much happier. As regards the features of five of the statuettes, lack of skill is there also evident, but those of S. Dunstan are creditable. Upon the whole, the draperies, which exhibit some variety, are gracefully drawn and the minor ornament at the base of the obverse (that of the reverse is past estimate) is well treated. Though qualified in its execution, the seal is indisputably the grandest and most gorgeous of those of our series.

The present remains of the pile are very beautiful. Almost entirely effaced is the great Church of SS. Peter and Paul, but of the exquisite chapel of S. Mary an important part yet stands. If we exclude the Abbot's kitchen, of the domestic buildings there are scarcely any vestiges.

GLOUCESTER, Dominican Friary, co. Gloucester.

PLATE XII.

SEAL 23.

RELIGIOUS foundations were anciently so numerous in this city as to incite the mediæval axiom—"As sure as God is in Gloucester." Oliver Cromwell declared, pithily enough if not truly, it contained "more Churches than Godliness!" The Friary under notice was situated near the yard of the castle which the Conqueror erected. Founded upon a small scale, *c.* A.D. 1239

by Hen. III., and Sir Stephen de Herneshull. King Henry, it is said, loved Gloucester better than London. He was crowned in its magnificent Cathedral (then the Abbey Church of SS. Peter and Paul), and doubtless the establishment of the Dominicans here was an expression of his attachment. In the next reign the house underwent some expansion, and was further enlarged *temp.* Ed. III. A remarkably fine impression of the Friary seal forms the subject of our relative illustration. The design comprises an arcading of two niches (supported by slender columns), each with a pointed canopy pinnacled and crocketted. In that upon the right stands S. Paul, holding his sword by the blade ; in the next, another Saint with a long Cross—probably intended for S. Helena. Under an arch at the base is the half-length figure of a friar in prayer.

S' COMMVNE · FR̄M · PREDICATOR · GLOVCESTRIE.

One of our minor examples which, chiefly in consequence of a restricted field, shares with the generality of them defective figure delineation. Those depicted here, however, have much that speak for them. It is the little Saint with the Cross which exhibits most crudity; its companion, on the right, is far from badly drawn. Distinctly good is the architectural element, and so is the friar at the base. Viewed as a whole, the design is quite artistic. The Friary Church still stands, but largely in a restored state. After the Reformation the domestic building was converted into a mansion, now used residentially and for workshops.

GOLDCLIFFE, Benedictine Priory of S. Mary Magdalene, co. Monmouth.

PLATE X.

SEAL 19.

A SMALL and alien foundation picturesquely located nearly sixty feet above the sea level, upon the brow of a rocky cliff which overlooks the Bristol Channel. The peninsula which embraced the site is about half-a-mile from the shore and three quarters-of-a-mile in circumference. It derives its name from a great bed of yellow mica at the base, which glitters like gold in the sunshine. The Priory was founded A.D. 1113 by Robert de Chandos. After he had liberally endowed it with various lands, at the request of Hen. I. he annexed it to the Abbey of Bec, Normandy, from whence came a Prior and twelve monks to occupy it. Upon the suppression of foreign institutions it was, with the consent of Hen. VI., attached to Tewkesbury Abbey. In A.D. 1445 the monks were compelled by the Welsh to retire to the parent house, but afterwards returned. Later in this reign the Priory was transferred to Eton College, but Tewkesbury regained

possession in the first of Ed. IV., only to lose it again six years after, when it was recovered by the College which still possesses the estate.

The Abbey seal was an armorial instance. It is to be regretted that the impression available is seriously imperfect, but what remains is remarkably lucid. From this we gather the design to have consisted of two richly canopied niches, one containing a full length representation of the B. Virgin with the Infant on the left arm, the other that of a saintly figure, probably intended for the patroness, S. Mary Magdalene. Over the niches are a star and crescent, repeated at the base near the dividing shaft, and under a sculptured arch at the foot is a shield of arms, three lions passant guardant (England) for Hen. I.

. . . . . BEATE · MARIE · MAGDALENE · DE · GOLDCLI . . . . . .

We are influenced in giving this seal illustration here by the peculiar nature of its architectural detail, and by the fine art which the fragment evinces. The studded supports and top of the central shaft of the canopy (a style we have not encountered elsewhere) elucidates the first, a merely superficial view betrays the second. The draping is excellent, the blazoning of the armorial charges good, whilst the scheme, as a whole, is rich. In the injured impression we have to deplore the destruction of a not unimportant piece of art.

A doorway and a few walls are all that now speak of the Priory.

GRACE-DIEU, Austin Priory of S. Mary and Holy Trinity, co. Leicester.

PLATE XII. Seal 24.

The home of the "Nuns of Belton," delightfully situated near the centre of the forest of Charnwood in the manor of Grace-Dieu and parish of Belton, erected *temp.* Hen. III. by Roesia de Verdon who installed Agnes de Gresley as the first Prioress. To it, Robert Kilwardby, Archbishop of Canterbury, A.D. 1277, assigned the parish Church. The house continued until the Dissolution, but few details are available of its public or inner life.

An impression, somewhat chipped and indistinct, serves our illustration of the Priory seal, which in point of date may be assigned to that of the foundation of the house. The design conveys, upon a platform, a trefoiled canopy upheld by slender pillars and surmounted by a Church-like structure with central tower and spire and gabled transepts, under which Our Lord sits upon a dais, raising His right hand in blessing and holding a book in the left. Below the platform, another trefoiled arch contains a

representation of the foundress, kneeling and offering to her Divine Master above the charter of her foundation, to which is attached a pendent seal—a detail, like that afforded by the reverse of Evesham Abbey, most pertinent to our subject.

SIGILL' CONVENT^{9} . . . . . ALĪV · DE · GRATIA . . . . . .

A singular example in several respects, happy in design and, if the state of the impression allows us to form an opinion, skilfully presented. There can be no question that the drapery of the chief figures was exceedingly well depicted and the figure itself nicely posed. The canopy seems somewhat over-weighted, and the little lady in the base is drawn with more quaintness than truth. Compared with the seal which accompanies it on the plate, a later instance as the architecture proves, its art was manifestly superior.

A large fragment of the Priory is still extant. Originally its precincts comprised two acres. The foundress was interred in the chapel which adjoined, and upon its destruction at the Dissolution her tomb was transferred to the parish Church of Belton where it is yet preserved.

HAGHMOND, Austin Canons' Abbey of S. John the Evangelist, co. Salop.

PLATE VI.

SEAL 12.

SITUATED upon the incline of a wooded hill (which derived its name, *Haut-mont*, the high mount, from its nature) historically famous as the place where, after the battle of Shrewsbury, Lord Douglas, whose horse fell as he was pursued, was captured. The Priory was held in some repute and possessed a landed estate spread over the dioceses of Chester, Hereford, Worcester, Coventry and S. Asaph, with a cell at Raunton. The canons enjoyed the extraordinary privilege, conferred with others by Pope Alexander III. A.D. 1172, that in the event of a general interdict being proclaimed they might, notwithstanding, perform the Divine office with closed doors. The Priory was founded A.D. 1110 by William Fitz-Allan of Clun, a great benefactor of Shropshire houses, who, on account of his espousal of the cause of the Empress Maud, was banished by K. Stephen, and did not enjoy his estates until after the accession of Hen. II., who shewed him considerable favour and gave many advantages to his foundation here. Ed. I. granted it leave to enclose twenty acres of the royal forest adjacent, and Ed. II. sixty more. It thus became surrounded by a large park of its own.

The second seal of the house, drawn from an imperfect but fair impression, is that presented. S. John the Evangelist writing his Gospel

forms the subject of the design, which displays the Saint seated to the right on a chair or throne which rests upon the back of an eagle (his famous symbol) writing upon a scroll (the end of which is held in the bird's beak), the opening passage:—IN PRINCI[PIO]. On either side of the Evangelist appears an ecclesiastic holding a book and some doubtful article; in the field a crescent and star, whilst over the head of S. John issues a Divine Hand—inspiring "the word."

S' COMVNE · CAPITVLI · DE · HAGHEMON.

An interesting example, which has no pretensions whatever to the artistic but is on the contrary condemned by the marked crudity visible in its execution. But the design is singular, and on that account it is admitted to our series.

Although it is impossible to trace the entire foundation, considerable ruins still exist and constitute an interesting feature of the historic hill upon which they stand. They are exceedingly beautiful and comprehend the Chapter house (which is entire) the southern doorway of the nave of the Church, and a line of buildings (held to be the Hall and Abbot's apartments) in both Norman and E. E. styles. The ponds, in which the store of fish was anciently preserved, also remain.

HEYNINGES (or Hevenynges), Priory of S. Mary, co. Lincoln.

PLATE XIII.

SEAL 25.

A VERY small, poorly endowed and unimportant establishment, occupied by nuns, of which we can gather but scant information. There is even a doubt as to whether it was a Benedictine or a Cistercian house. Some historians place it under the first rule, Leland and the Act of Surrender under the second. It lay within the parts of Lindsey in the parish of Lea about two miles from Gainsborough. Architectural vestiges of no great size, with fish ponds and moat, are still to be seen indicating precisely the location. For its origin, *c.* A.D. 1180, it was indebted to Rayner Evermue. Upon the foundation there were usually twelve members, exclusive of the Prioress. A remarkably fine impression enables us to afford a convincing illustration of the Priory seal. The design conveys a trefoiled canopy, supported by architectural pillars, with a Church-like structure accommodated to the shape of the *vesica*, on either side. Below, the B. Virgin, crowned, sits enthroned and suckling the Divine Infant, nimbussed, who sits upon her left knee. Above the canopy two censing angels are seen, and in the field of the niche a star (above the Virgin's head), sun, crescent, quatrefoil, and a second crescent.

S' · SANCTE · MARIE · ET : CŌ : UENTVS : D' HEYNINGE.

From the abundant remains of mediæval seals, two examples must on account of their more magnificent art be distinctly separated. Upon the artistic plane, they occupy an altitude of which all other specimens fall short The altitude itself approaches the highest and marks the final stage of development. The first of the remarkable examples referred to is the "Madonna della Sedia" contributed by Merton Priory; the second, the seal now illustrated, of Heyninges Priory. Between these two certain artistic differences naturally exist, but it must be conceded the first named is supreme. Both, however, are superlative, and the acknowledged superiority of the one does not very appreciably out-distance the other. Of the seal immediately under notice the design was conceived in intense beauty and fervour, and executed with remarkable delicacy, spirit, and skill. Examined in detail, every appropriate canon is challenged by the perfect disposition of the figures, whilst the figures themselves are drawn not only with truth but with marvellous feeling also. The features of the Virgin, although they lack that signally beautiful expression of those of the Merton Madonna, are finely portrayed—concerning those of the Child less can be said—and the draping reaches the acme of grace. Viewed as a whole the scheme is exceedingly fine and rich, and the impression leads to the conviction that in it we have the echo of a superb and exquisite piece of art.

HOLME CULTRAM, Cistercian Abbey of S. Mary, co. Cumberland.

PLATE X. Seal 20.

A HOUSE royal in origin, of some consequence and associated with some significant historical events. It was well endowed, and the Abbot was occasionally summoned to Parliament. The situation lies below Derwent in a small creak in the Irish Sea and in the parish of Holme Cultram, a place of importance anciently and also called Holme Abbey. Michael Scott, the reputed wizard, was a monk here and here with his magic books was burnt. The Abbey was founded A.D. 1150 by Prince Henry (son of David, King of Scotland), who gave it two-thirds of the manor of Holme Cultram. At the time, the remaining third was held by Alan, son of Waldeve, as a hunting chase, but not long after the monks possessed the whole. Upon gaining possession of the county, Hen. II. took the house under his care. For its complete estate it was indebted to the generosity of a number of persons. Through pillage, A.D. 1216, the Abbey suffered

at the hands of the army of Alexander of Scotland. Here, during the October of A.D. 1300, Ed. I. personally liberated the Bishop of Glasgow and, in the presence of the Bishop of Carlisle, the Abbot and French envoys, received his allegiance. Heedless of the fact that it contained the tomb of his father Robert Bruce ravaged and almost demolished the house. It was magnificently restored thereafter, and A.D. 1383, to save it from destruction during an attack made by the Earl of Douglas, the Abbot was forced to pay two hundred pounds. To protect their treasures, books, and charters from the abrupt incursions of the Scots the monks erected a fortress a short distance west of the Abbey.

The seal employed by the Abbey was an armorial example. The impression available for illustration here is chipped and much injured through pressure. In design, it comprises beneath a trefoiled canopy upheld by slender columns with architectural work at the top, and against a diapered field, the B. Virgin, crowned, holding the Divine Infant in her left arm, and standing upon a shield (supported by the hands of two monks whose heads only appear besides), which displays three lions passant guardant—the arms of England—in allusion to the patronage which from the time of Hen. II. was vested in the crown. On either side of the canopy is a small pointed and crocketted niche, the dexter containing a full-length representation of an Abbot with staff and book (perhaps intended for S. Robert the founder of the Cistercian order); the sinister, at the same length, the figure of Hen. II. (whose association has been shewn) with crown and sceptre. In the base is a lion, drawn from the arms above, dormant.

S'C . . . . . BATIS · ET · CONVENTVS · DE · HOLMCOLTRAM.

An elegant and very interesting example, which displays rather novel disposition. The theory of its decoration is well conceived, its actual arrangement nicely poised. Imperfections in the impression deny criticism of the features, but it is clear high skill lies in the treatment of the figures. That of the B. Virgin is well drawn and placed, as are the remaining, but the Abbatial figure reveals the finest art. The draperies and vestments are well manipulated, whilst in the heraldic charges the charm of mediæval blazoning is preserved. Altogether the seal is eminently artistic.

At the Dissolution the tenants of the Abbey craved the King to spare the Church. He did, and this structure largely restored continues as the Parish Church to-day. Although the conventual buildings after the surrender received much damage, they were not finally destroyed until the Civil Wars. In the Churchyard a few remains may yet be seen. The character of the Church is E.E.

HORSHAM, Benedictine Priory of S. Faith, co. Norfolk.

PLATE XVIII. SEAL 35.

A SMALL foundation, originally alien but enfranchised in the reign of Rich. II., situated about four miles from Norwich, off the Cromer Road. The circumstances which incited its erection are of peculiar interest. Robert FitzWalter (also called Robert de Cadomo or Caen, son of Walter de Cadomo, lord of Horsford) and Sibill his wife (daughter and heiress of Ralph de Caineto, or Cheney) were returning in the early years of the twelfth century, through France, from a pilgrimage to Rome, when they were set upon by brigands and captured. In their stress they called upon God and S. Faith of Aquitaine (a child martyr of the ancient martyrology of France who suffered in the persecution of Diocletian) for deliverance, and were miraculously rescued. To the shrine of S. Faith at Conches Abbey they proceeded to return thanks. They were hospitably entertained by the Abbot and before leaving resolved, upon a safe return to England, to found a Priory in honour of their saintly deliverer. Accordingly, here *c.* A.D. 1105 they jointly raised the house under notice, and annexed it as a cell to Conches. Their descendants and others assisted in increasing its possessions. Pope Alexander by Bull confirmed A.D. 1163, in which year the Hospital of the Knights of S. John of Jerusalem here was given it. The scanty records of the Priory are of no particular interest.

The Chapter seal was a dual one, contrived, as an inscription which appeared on the rim indicated, either A.D. 1246 or 1256. Unhappily, the impression available for reproduction here is incomplete at one of the sides and somewhat lacks lucidity; nevertheless it affords a good idea of the original. The design of the obverse commemorates the miraculous deliverance of the founders and displays, under a niche with trefoiled arch and pinnacled and crocketted canopy, the full-length figure of S. Faith, crowned, and supporting a fleury sceptre. Upon each side of the niche, above a low masoned wall, occurs a kneeling figure, one in chains, designed no doubt to represent Robert FitzWalter and Sibill his wife. The sceptre which is carried by S. Faith probably alludes to her French connection. She was very much esteemed in England. Tradition records that she was of noble parentage and very beautiful, and met her death stretched upon a fire. A saintly Bishop witnessed her sufferings in a vision. As he prayed in her behalf, lo! in the Heavens he saw the young maiden crowned with precious and richly coloured stones, and further, a dove, from whose wings fell a soft dew which quenched the flames, descend and rest upon her head.

. . . . . APITL'I : ECCE : SCE : FIDIS : [D]E : HORSHAM :

PLATE XVIII. Seal 36.

The B. Virgin was also regarded as a patron of the Priory, and in illustration the scheme of the reverse comprehended the subject of her Coronation. Below a canopy of two trefoiled arches, supported by two slender pillars, Our Lord is seen seated with the B. Virgin by his side, and placing a crown upon her head. On the right hand side appears the head of a monk inclining to the left, and below it a small shield of arms, quarterly first and fourth a bend, second and third a fret (Cheney), for the wife of Robert FitzWalter. No doubt a shield of the husband's armorials appeared in correspondence, where the impression is defective. The Coronation of the B. Virgin is frequently met with in seal art. In the mosaics on the tribune of Sta Maria in Trastevere, Rome, is the oldest known representation of the theme. It dates from about the middle of the twelfth century. Fra Angelico has made us familiar with it.

ECCE : CORONATA · SEDET : HIC : PIA : [VIRGO : BEATA :]

The bordures of both parts of the seal were beaded. Of the inscription which appeared on the rim the following is all that can be read from the impression :—

. . . . . MIL : DVCENT : Q . . . . . O : SEX [TO :]

This example readily commends itself, not alone on account of its beauty but by reason of the little paragraph of minor history presented by the first, and the graphic delineation of its theme by the second part. Artistically, both schemes in their apprehension are distinctly good, and as far as the condition of the impression allows us to judge—to a limited extent only—expressed with considerable skill. All the figures, including the two little captives upon the obverse, would appear to have been well drawn; they are all arranged with truth and gracefully draped, whilst the architecture of the first part is excellent. But it is the effect of the two schemes we are most qualified to estimate, and the conclusion is that in this they are both happy.

HYDE (or Newminster), Benedictine Abbey of SS. Peter, Grimbald, and Barnabas, co. Hants.

PLATE XXIV. Seal 48.

One of our more distinguished and stately seats of monasticism which boasted a royal foundation and an ancient lineage. It possessed great wealth, many valuable privileges, influence over a large area, and a magnificent Church which contained the tombs of Alfred the Great, his Queen, and some of the Saxon Kings. Without the walls of the city of Winchester, it stood in the suburb of Hyde (part of the parish of S. Bartholomew), but was

originally erected upon the north side of the Cathedral. There, K. Alfred began, in honour of the Holy Trinity, B. Virgin, and S. Peter, the erection of a noble Church, completed by his son Edward who also built the offices necessary for the reception of a religious society. By charter dated A.D. 903 K. Ed. liberally endowed it and placed therein a number of secular canons under the Abbacy of Grimbald, a learned monk brought by K. Alfred out of Flanders. To distinguish the new from the old foundation of S. Swithun's this was called Newminster. The ground it absorbed was obtained of the monks of the ancient house and certain citizens. It was three acres and three virgates in extent, and every foot (William of Malmesbury) cost a mark of gold. K. Ed.'s successors, Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred also contributed to the estate of Newminster. Complaints having been made against the seculars, K. Edgar directed Bishop Ethelwold of Winchester to introduce the rule of S. Benedict, which he did. Alwy the Abbot, brother of Earl Godwin, accompanied Harold and was slain with him at Hastings. Out of revenge for the Abbot's opposition the Conqueror seized the Abbey and parcelled its estate between himself and his partizans, but afterwards restored what he had appropriated personally and compensated for the rest. Throughout his reign William Rufus appropriated the rents and sold the Abbey to Herbert de Losinga, Abbot of Ramsey, who purchased it for his father, and the Bishopric of Thetford for himself. For the story of the Bishop's splendid expiation see Norwich Priory. Upon the accession of Hen. I. the grievances of the preceding reign were remedied. Between the monks of the two houses differences repeatedly occurred which rendered separation desirable; moreover those of Newminster were anxious to obtain a quieter and more convenient situation. Hyde was selected as a new site, upon which Hen. I. erected a magnificent house, and thither A.D. 1110 the monks of Newminster retreated. In the time of K. Stephen the Church and buildings were destroyed by fire, and in the following reign rebuilt on lines of even greater stateliness. Henry of Blois, Bishop of Winchester, was accused of the destruction of the erection of Hen. I. He was sued by the monks, and forced to go to Rome to clear himself.

The second seal of the house was a fine and dual instance. The impression in the National collection is, as regards the obverse, so woefully indistinct as to defy anything like a satisfactory reproduction here. It is the reverse—which, whilst it lacks sharpness of outline, has suffered less than the companion part through the vicissitudes of the centuries—which forms the subject of our relative note. Obversely the design comprehended an elaborately designed Gothic façade of three niches, the central containing the enthronement of S. Peter, between Kings Alfred and Edward the

Elder, with some minor embellishment in the field. Reversely, it comprises an architectural façade (differing in design from that upon the obverse) consisting of three pointed niches, trefoiled upon the inner and pinnacled and crocketted upon the outer side, the centre one of larger proportions than the rest. In this instance the chief is occupied by S. Barnabas the Apostle, with a long cross in his right hand, a book in the left ; the dexter by S. Valentine, supporting a symbol the nature of which it is difficult to determine, and the sinister S. Grimbald, the first Abbot, with staff and book. Below the central figure and in the field beyond the side niches the relative names of the Saints depicted are inscribed, and the plinth sustains certain indecipherable lettering presumed to be the conclusion of an hexameter verse commenced upon the obverse. The first and second persons of the original dedication seem to have disappeared. Of the new foundation SS. Barnabas and Grimbald were occasionally included in the patronage, which explains their appearance here. S. Valentine's association is not immediately apparent. The almost obsolete custom, once of very wide prevalence, of sending Valentines upon his festival arose from the ancient notion that on that day birds began to pair.

: HYDA : PATRONORVM : IVGI : PRECE : TVTA : SIT : HORVM :

That Hyde Abbey was in the enjoyment of a superb seal is manifest from our illustration and the even richer obverse. Its style in essentials embraced that of various others of its time and order. The scheme of the reverse faithfully responds to very rigorous canons of art. In its architectural ornament much beauty is evinced ; in its figures accurate disposition and drawing were achieved, together with a graceful effect in varied draping. The standard reached in facial limning it is impossible to estimate.

When Leland reached here, but a few years after the Dissolution, the splendid fabric had all but vanished. The Church of S. Barnabas is reputed to have been erected with its stones. Very little now remains—a gateway and some parts of the precinct walls and outbuildings are all.

KENILWORTH, Austin Canons' Abbey of S. Mary, co. Warwick.

PLATE XXXVII. SEAL 73.

A RICH, well privileged house, originally a Priory, which stood east of the stately castle, the remains of which constitute a picturesque and interesting feature of the town. An ancient gateway and some fragments of the walls yet indicate the precise site of the Abbey. It was founded A.D. 1122 by Geoffrey de Clinton—Treasurer and Chamberlain of Hen. I., from whom

he received the manor—who afterwards commenced the erection of the castle. To the canons installed in the religious establishment he gave with other property all the lands and woods of Kenilworth save what he reserved for the fortress and park. His son also was one of several benefactors. The canons had power to keep court-leet, assize of bread and beer, the right to try malefactors, freedom from suit to county and hundred courts, and various free warrens. During the siege of the castle, *temp.* Hen. III. the resources of the house were reduced to a degree which necessitated a call for assistance from its various tenants. A little counterseal, used in conjunction with the corporate, affords the subject of our illustration, taken from a good impression. The design comprehends the half-length figure of an Angel—in view of the dedication, probably intended for S. Gabriel—raising the right hand in blessing.

CERA PATĒS CELAT Q^{E} CARTVLA SCESA REVELAT.

A charming little instance, full of grace and beauty. Although the features are entirely effaced the remaining detail proves the high art involved in conception and execution. The figure is well modelled, and the wings are well drawn, whilst the folds of the vesting are as richly as they are finely delineated.

KIRKSTEAD, Cistercian Abbey of S. Mary, co. Lincoln.

PLATE XIII.

SEAL 26.

A HOUSE of no mean size or importance which possessed an ample revenue. It stood upon the river Witham, about two miles distant from Tattershall. To-day a few ruins and a remarkably beautiful chapel of E.E. character are to be seen. Erected A.D. 1139 upon a plain hemmed in with brambles and marshes (said to have received the name of "Kirkstead" in prophesy before any such structure was contemplated) and endowed by Hugo Brito, son of Eudo, lord of Tateshale. It was filled with monks from Fountains Abbey. About the date of foundation William de Dentune made a gift of the wood of Langhage. Other and later benefactors included Gerard de Furnivall, who gave a mill for the maintenance of candles at mass; Richard de Builli, certain building sites, an orchard, land for the erection of two forges for founding and two for working iron, permission to mine sufficient coal for two fires and collect wood from the forest for four; and Guarin, who granted the use of his quarries. A historian of the Cistercians, Hugh, was a native and an inmate of the Abbey.

A very fine impression enables us to present the seal of the Abbot and convent, a valuable armorial exemplification. The scheme comprises primarily a pointed niche (pinnacled and crocketted upon the exterior and

trefoiled within the interior, supported by two architectural pillars rising from a platform) which contains the enthronement of the B. Virgin, crowned, and the Holy Infant upon her left knee. On either side of the canopy is a shield of arms, that on the left side blazoning chequy a chief ermine; that on the right a cross moline. Below the platform referred to is a row of three Norman arches under which the Abbot with pastoral staff kneels to the right with two monks, depicted at half-length, all three petitioning the figures above. In the field over the Virgin's head is a star; on the right of the canopy a bird; over the sinister shield the letter "S" with a wavy sprig of foliage, and over the dexter the letter "K" with corresponding detail. The arms of the first shield are those of Tattershalle, the founder's family, but it is difficult to account for the others. Although unrecorded, it was perhaps employed as a distinctive coat by the house. The bird was possibly introduced to typify the Holy Spirit. The seal dates from the Abbacy of Simon (A.D. 1250) and the initial letters stand for "Simon of Kirkstead." The sprigs or brambles allude, maybe, to the nature of the site.

SIGILLV̄ · CŌMVNE · ABBATIS · ET · CŌVENTUS · SCE̅ · MARIE · DE · KYRKESTEDE

In the seal described we have not only an exquisite and striking example, but, as the elucidation of its ornament shews, one of very great interest also. Its virtues lie chiefly in its composition. In the grouping of the well-selected elements of its design excellent taste is manifest. Its contriver was indubitably an artist of no mean order or skill. The effect of his work is considerable magnificence without detraction from purity or grace. Our analysis details specifically the extent of its ornament, and so artistically is this distributed that not an item is imperfect or suffers from lack of space. Compared with the illustration which accompanies it on the plate the standard of its execution falls short of it, but No. 25, as we have elsewhere noted, is a superlative example. In brief, the instance afforded here is decidedly artistic.

KYME, Austin Priory of S Mary, co. Lincoln.

PLATE VI. SEAL II.

A VERY small institution, which contained at the Dissolution no more than nine canons exclusive of the Prior. Once situated in the parish of South Kyme about six miles from the market town of Sleaford, where the Bishops of Lincoln had anciently a magnificent palace, of which there is now no trace. Founded in the reign of Hen. II. by Philip de Kyme, Knight, and endowed by him, his son Simon, and some few others. Information

regarding this foundation is very meagre. Its life, public and private, was perhaps silent and uneventful from its inception until the period when Ralph Fairfax, the last Prior, was called upon to surrender his charge. At that time its revenue was ample to comfortably maintain its complement.

The seal of the house illustrated here (from an impression which, though complete, betrays sad havoc from pressure) was the first employed by it. It gave place to another of later contrivance and different design. The scheme of this under notice presents a graphic realization of a theme very frequently encountered in seal art—the "Annunciation." Within a cable bordure it exhibits the B. Virgin at full length and nimbussed, before whom appears the angel Gabriel also nimbussed (and depicted at full length) to hail her as "highly favoured" of the Lord and "blessed . . . . among women," and to announce to her that she should conceive in her womb and bring forth a Son who should "be called the Son of the Highest." Between the two figures is a *fleur-de-lis*, symbolic of the Virgin's purity, growing upon a long stalk out of a flower pot (the invariable accompaniment of mediæval representations of this subject), a device which is repeated behind the B. Virgin, where the stalk iscurved to comply with the restrictions of the configuration.

✠ SIGILLVM PRIORIS ET CONVENTVS DE KIMA.

Although, as we have observed already, the subject of the seal is common to the art we are attempting to illustrate, it probably received here unique treatment since other representations we have seen display the theme less graphically. From a cause we are, unhappily, so frequently called upon to deplore—the imperfect nature of the impression—we are deprived of a complete deduction in regard to its artistic qualities. Superficially, however, it would appear that these were great. The design is a beautiful one. The figures apparently were well drawn, nicely disposed, and gracefully vested. The feathering and shape of the angel's wing exhibit skilful limning. Our final conclusion is that in the object which serves our illustration we have the shadow of an unusually fine substance.

KYPIER (or Kepire), Hospital of S. Giles, co. Durham.

PLATE V.

SEAL 9.

A FAIR hospice which contained a Master and thirteen brethren. It enjoyed a delightful situation, since it stood close to the lovely woods of Kypier where a stream flows through a deep, rocky, and richly-verdant ravine, below the Chapel of S. Mary Magdalene. Founded and endowed A.D. 1112, fitly in honour of the patron of the woodland, by Ralph Flambard, Bishop of Durham. The charitable character of the house

afforded it no protection from the contentions of the times, for we find in the following reign (that of Stephen) when the usurper Comyn hankered after the great Bishopric and Palatinate of Durham, he and his partizans laid the hospice with its adjoining Chapel in ashes. Another prelate of Durham, Hugh de Puisac (A.D. 1153-1195) effected its restoration. He rebuilt the edifice, confirmed its original possessions, enlarged them, and for its future government drew up a body of statutes which, *inter alia*, directed that of the thirteen members thenceforward to be upon the foundation, six should officiate in the Chapel (one as confessor) and the remainder carry out the domestic duties.

In the use of a seal the brethren seem to have been somewhat inconstant, since it is the fourth employed by them which affords our illustration. It is taken from a good impression. The design exhibits, against a diapered field, a representation of S. Giles (Egidius, patron of Edinburgh, who was born at Athens A.D. 645) vested as a Bishop, with pastoral staff in the left hand, standing upon a corbel (embellished with masonry, a terrace of circular-headed arches, and a string course or frieze) accompanied by a fawn, tripping away from, but looking towards him. For the poetical legend which associates the animal here depicted with S. Giles, we must refer the reader to our Introduction (p. 25). The lozengy spaces of the diapering are each occupied by a rose, and a row of the same appears on the frieze. Possibly these flowers were suggested by and alluded to the situation of the Hospital.

✠SIGILLVM : SANCTI : EGIDII : DE : KYPPIER.

This constitutes a very pleasing example. Both the design and the method of carrying it out were delicate and apt. In our impression the countenance is ruined, but the figure is well portrayed and disposed, whilst the vestments are richly and adroitly presented.

A picturesque gateway with a wide pointed arch is all that now remains of this estimable foundation.

LANERCOST, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary Magdalene, co. Cumberland.

PLATE XLIII.

SEAL 85.

A HOUSE, with important historical associations, which stood upon the northern bank of the river Irthing about two miles and a half from Brampton. Although ample, its estate was not of great magnitude. Founded A.D. 1169 by Robert de Vallibus, lord of Gilsland, and endowed by him and others. Ed. I., who annexed two Churches, visited it on three occasions, firstly with Queen Eleanor, thirdly with Queen Margaret. In A.D. 1296 it was

burnt by the Scots. Here Robert Bruce, King of Scotland, A.D. 1311 lay with his army for three days. He imprisoned several of the monks, but ultimately gave them their liberty. In A.D. 1344 the house was again pillaged, by David, King of Scotland. We are fortunate in having the use of a very fine impression to illustrate the Priory seal. It displayed a full-length representation of the patroness, S. Mary Magdalene, clad in long flowing attire, holding in her right hand a palm branch and in her left a covered unguent-pot (her customary emblem), standing upon a platform, between wavy branches of flowers and foliage (reminiscent, perhaps, of the famous meeting in the Garden), and below a crescent and wavy star.

S' CAPITL'I : SCE̅ : MARIE : MAGDALENE : DE : LANRECOST.

A fine bold example which in the treatment of the figure displays remarkable vigour and secures that clever effect of large dimensions elsewhere denoted and appraised. In the features much skill is in evidence, in the drawing of the form and its pose more, but it is in the depiction of costume the artist excelled. The folds of the latter are not only gracefully thought out but wrought with distinct ability. Viewed as a whole, the art of the seal reaches a very high standard.

The nave of the ancient Abbey Church has been preserved, and continues as the parish Church. It is chiefly in E.E. style, with Norman portions. There are both picturesque and interesting ruins of other parts of the institution. They comprise vestiges of other portions of the Church, cloisters, refectory and other buildings, grown over with ivy, ash, and other plants. The western gateway which consists of a Norman arch supported by pilasters is richly decorated and surmounted by a statue of S. Mary Magdalene.

LANGDON, Premonstratensian Abbey of SS. Mary and Thomas the Martyr, co. Kent.

PLATE XIV. Seal 27.

A SMALL inconsequential establishment, prevented from maintaining its abbatial dignity by an inadequate revenue. It was situated inland about three miles from the ancient Cinque port of Dover, within the parish of West Langdon, and lathe of S. Augustine. A few ivy-covered walls are all that now remain of the Abbey and Church which adjoined. Erected A.D. 1192 by William de Auberville, who endowed it and installed certain white canons from Leyston, Suffolk. The founder's charter was confirmed by

Simon de Abrinciis, presumed to have been the superior lord of the fee, and by Nicholas de Crioll, Knight—who likewise assured the advowsons of numerous Churches—in the time of Ed. I. Gunnora de Soveldone and Dennise de Newesole granted a chapel at Newesole. For the reason stated, the election of an Abbot ceased for a long period, the Prior administering in chief, but in the reign of Hen. VIII. the higher office was again filled. References to the house during the three and a half centuries it continued are very meagre. By inference, contending against the trials its poverty induced was the most active part it enacted.

Two seals of the Abbey have been selected for illustration. The first is the corporate contrivance which is of two parts; the second, perhaps, although it is not so defined by the superscription, an *ad causas*. Of the first, executed late in the thirteenth century, the matrices are still extant. That they are somewhat worn would appear from our illustration which is derived from a modern impression. Obversely, the design comprehends an architectural façade of three pointed niches, pinnacled and crocketted, with an architectural wing, composed of windows and supported by a bracket, on either side. In each case the side niches are occupied by four storeys of double niches, but the central is exhibited in section, and contains, under an arch with five cusps and above a corbel in which several quatrefoil panels are sunk, the enthronement of the B. Virgin —the chief patroness—crowned and supporting the Divine Infant.

✠SIGILL' · COMMVNE : MONASTERII : ECCE : BE : MARIE : DE : LANGEDON :

PLATE XIV. SEAL 28.

REVERSELY, the subject of the seal is the martyrdom of S. Thomas of Canterbury, the second patron. The scheme comprises, against a diapered field, Canterbury Cathedral, represented here with central spire surmounted by a cross, gable ends with crosses, and three storeys of double niches. The side of the Cathedral is in section and reveals the action of the tragedy. Here the Archbishop is seen kneeling before the high altar, and behind him his four murderers, Reginald Fitzurse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy, and Richard the Breton, the leader with sword about to strike, whilst one of the monks, who had vainly besought him to fly, holds up a long cross and protests against the murder.

: CAVSA : DOMVS : XPI : MORTEM : SIC : INTVLIT : ISTI :

By reason of the comparative infrequency of pictorial representation in seal art and the commemoration here of an historical event this seal possesses great interest. Both in its causes and consequences the incident depicted, not without a certain power of expression if with qualified skill, was largely significant. The courage with which the Archbishop met his death persuaded the people of the justice of his disagreement with the

King, whilst his opposition to the Danegelt, with his charity and austerities, his championship of the rights of the Church, and his loyal adhesion to a cause exacted from the poor, the clergy, and all classes an extraordinary measure of respect. In A.D. 1174 he was canonized, and took his place in the English calendar as the favourite hero of the Church. His martyrdom gave rise to a wide devotion in mediæval times, to which the seal draws attention. Both schemes were artistically conceived, but in their execution reveal some crudity. Whilst the architecture of the obverse is well presented, and the disposition and vesting of the figures are not lacking in merit, the figures themselves betray inaccuracies of drawing. Upon the reverse the Church is well wrought. The figures within it are somewhat unfinished, but the grouping is effective and the result vivid and real.

PLATE XLVI.

SEAL 91.

THE second seal belonging to the Abbey which finds illustration here is drawn from an excellent impression. In design it exhibits the enthronement of the B. Virgin, crowned, with her feet resting upon a carved corbel, supporting on the left the Child Jesus, nimbussed, and a *fleur-de-lis* sceptre in her right hand. The Infant raises the right Hand in benediction and holds the Gospels in His left.

✠S' ECCL'E : BE : MARIE : DE : LANGEDONNE :

If we apply the stringent canons of art to this instance, of necessity we must define it as defective ; the position of the B. Virgin is cramped and uncomfortable, whilst the figure is not drawn with the strictest faith. But if we temper criticism with sympathy we recognize in it much feeling, honesty of effort and latent skill, together with a boldness of treatment which is praiseworthy. Unless a fiction of the Commissioner—a very reasonable conjecture—the discovery made by Leyton when he forced an entrance to the Abbey does not redound to the credit of the last Abbot of Langdon.

LEDES, Austin Canons' Priory of SS. Mary and Nicholas, co. Kent.

PLATE XXVI.

SEAL 51.

A FAMOUS house, charmingly situated upon a hill of gentle ascent which overshadows a stream falling into the sea, and sheltered by a wood. The manor (conjectured to have received its title from Ledian, a counsellor of Ethelbert II., who erected a fortress within it) belonged to Archbishop Odo, and was afterwards given by Wm. I. to Robert de Crévecœur (Rivenheart).

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In lieu of the Saxon fortalice, Robert A.D. 1071 erected another, one of the most interesting in all England, and with a view of supplying the spiritual needs of its occupants afterwards determined to raise a religious foundation near by. Accordingly, he and his son Adam, A.D. 1119, erected this Priory with a Church upon a site they gave about three-quarters of a mile distant. The founders endowed the Priory with land lying on either side, free commonage for cattle, East Park wood and some fields which adjoined. Subsequent members of the De Crévecœur family increased its possessions. In the reign of Hen. II. their castle was sequestered. In that of Rich. II. the Prior and some other members of the house slew a monk of S. Albans. After considerable dissension with the injured Abbey they were absolved by Pope Boniface IX. Through poverty, the Priory was threatened with extinction in the reign of Hen. VII., when James Goldwell, Bishop of Norwich, came to its relief. He also founded a chantry for one priest who was to say a daily mass for ever upon the altar of the patroness, which stood in the nave of the Church, for the good of his and the souls of his parents. The Priory was subject to the jurisdiction of the See of Canterbury, a subjection Pope Innocent III. confirmed. Accordingly the Prior was instituted by the Archdeacon, who was entitled to remain at the Priory for two nights and a day, receiving food the while.

The second seal of the house, a dual one (each part of which commemorates a unit of the joint dedication), forms the subject of our corresponding plate. Although the left-hand side of the impression which serves us is wanting, what remains is distinctly fine and lucid. The scheme of the obverse comprehends a niche, with a canopy over of three pointed arches, pinnacled and crocketted, and two architectural supports, each containing four double-arched windows placed one above the other. The interior of the niche is divided into two sections. The first, the larger, contains the enthronement of the B. Virgin, who supports the Holy Child upon her knee with the left, and hands him a ball with the right hand, between two angels, each with an elevated wing. Above a trefoiled arch, arcaded at the sides, the second section contains a representation of the Prior, between two canons, depicted at half-length and in prayer. Upon the right of the field, outside the façade, is a triple-towered castle which speaks of the proximity of, and association with Ledes Castle, with a rose and a drooping lily-flower, both emblems of the B. Virgin, above and below. Presumably these ornaments were engraved upon the sinister side (now torn away) in correspondence.

[S]IGILLVM · COMMVNE · EC . . . . . S.

PLATE XXVI.

SEAL 52.

As regards the architectural detail, the design of the reverse resembles with slight variation that of the chief part. The principal section of the niche is, in this instance, occupied by a representation of S. Nicholas (Bishop of Myra and the "Santa Claus" of the children) mitred, seated, raising the right hand in blessing and grasping a staff with the left, between two canons, both standing and holding a book. Under a trefoiled arch in the lower section is depicted a tub, containing three children between two angels. A sprig of foliage is introduced in the field on the right, and the name of the saint upon the inner annulus, but what device corresponded upon the left we are unable to conjecture. S. Nicholas was anciently one of the more popular saints, whose name was inscribed in all the calendars. He is reputed to have suffered torture and imprisonment in the persecution of Diocletian, and to have afterwards appeared, with his glorious scars, with other Confessors at the Council of Nice. He was regarded essentially as the patron of tiny children, sailors, scholars, distressed maidens, the oppressed and the stranger, and is still the patron of Russia. The device at the base of the reverse commemorates one of the many legends which were extant concerning him. A rather gruesome story, thus related. During his episcopate, a terrible famine came over Myra and an innkeeper, through the dearth of food, was tempted to murder his children. He did so and placed their bodies in a salting pan, with a view of serving them up to his guests. As S. Nicholas passed one day he was shocked by the voices of tortured children. He descended to the cellar, and after praying drew the children out of the tub alive. In England S. Nicholas was highly popular. There was scarce a town of any magnitude, it is said, which did not possess a Church dedicated to him. On his feast the "Boy Bishop" pageants commenced.

. . . . E : A[NNO :] DN̄I : M : CC : NONOG' : TERCIO.

By reason of its story an interesting example and at the same time, on account of a certain originality of treatment which it exhibits, a striking one. From its apprehension we deduce the action of a mind imaginative as well as devout and artistic, in which, moreover, legend was as irrefragable as truth. Viewed concretely, every detail being well marshalled and telling, the arrangement of both schemes is excellent, and the effect secured one of much beauty and richness. Scanned analytically, defects in the modelling of the chief figures are revealed as well as inaccuracies of drawing, a slight absence of the natural in their postures, and a lack of facial expression, but otherwise they are very commendable. As regards the draperies and vestments, our selection will afford numerous examples which excel in this respect, but these here are not ungracefully pelineated. Differing from what is almost a rule, in this case the lesser

features of the designs seem to have evoked most pains in the execution. The little angels and the drooping lily are presented in a highly artistic fashion. Upon the artistic plane the seal as a whole, occupies an elevated position. It dates from A.D. 1293.

The Church of the Abbey, which contained a famous shrine of the B. Virgin, equalled in beauty and proportions and magnificence some of our Cathedrals, whilst the domestic buildings constituted a pile of corresponding size and grandeur. All have disappeared.

LUFFIELD, Benedictine Priory of S. Mary, co. Northampton.

PLATE XXXIV. SEAL 68.

THIS house, in consequence of its poverty, did not continue to meet the common doom but suffered extinction in the reign which preceded. It stood in the forest of Whittlewood, within the lordship of Silveston, and curiously linked the counties of Northampton and Buckingham — the Church standing in the first, the conventual offices in the second. Founded, *temp.* Hen. I., by Robert Bossu, Earl of Leicester, who conveyed to a monk named Malgerius ground for the erection, and nominated him the first Prior. The names of several benefactors are on record. And at one time the house appears to have enjoyed an estate by no means insignificant. Ed. I. gave it a hermitage ; Ed. III. a three days fair. In the reign of the latter, Henry Greene, Knight, bestowed one hundred marks to renew the roof of the choir. Daily masses were said in return, for the estate of his family and their souls. At the hands of robbers the Priory suffered considerably in the reign of Hen. III.

A fine impression of its seal enables us to present a good illustration. This reveals the design to have comprehended, upon a diapered field, a trefoiled arch, with Church-like canopy upheld by two spiral columns (possibly unique in mediæval seal art), which contains the enthronement of the B. Virgin, who holds the Holy Infant (cruciformly nimbussed, the right Hand raised in benediction, the left holding a book of the Gospels) on her left knee, and a fleury sceptre in her right hand. In the base the Prior kneels to the left.

S' : COMMVNIS : SANCTE : MARIE : D'. LVFFEILT.

An example, with little to commend it, introduced on account of the peculiar style of its architectural ornament. But small are the claims of the seal to be considered artistic, and but meagre was the skill involved in its execution. Luffield Priory was suppressed by Pope Alexander VI.

and its estate annexed to Westminster Abbey, in furtherance of the erection of his famous chapel there by Hen. VII. No architectural vestiges remain, but a boundary-cross marks the site of the Church.

MERTON, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary, co. Surrey.

PLATE I. SEAL 1.

A FAMOUS and liberally endowed house, situated upon the river Wandle in the parish of the name, in which S. Thomas à Becket was educated and Merton College, Oxford, probably originated. If not the first, one of the earlier Augustinian settlements in England. Some variance is to be found in the accounts which relate its foundation. One states that it was erected *temp.* Hen. I., by Gilbert Norman, High Sheriff of Surrey, who is said to have endowed with the manor and obtained the royal confirmation; another, that the manor was granted A.D. 1121 by the King to certain canons to enable them to construct it. The first Prior was Robert Bayle, the tutor of S. Thomas of Canterbury. We find the first erection to have been built of wood; in A.D. 1130 the foundations were laid of a stone structure completed six years later. During the reign of Hen. III. the Priory was brought into some prominence. Here the Barons A.D. 1236 held a Parliament in which those laws distinguished as the "Provisions of Merton" (if we except the Magna Carta, the most ancient group of English statutes only annulled in A.D. 1863) were enacted. At this assembly an effort was made to introduce the imperial and canon law, which evoked from the Barons the famous challenge:—"We will not have the laws of England changed!" It was here also peace was brought about by the Papal Legate, Gaulo, between Henry and the dauphin of France. And when, for opposing a foolish war policy, Hubert de Burgh, the great Chief Justiciary, fell under under Henry's anger here he found a refuge. During the same reign, within the Priory, Walter de Merton, Lord High Chancellor and later Bishop of Rochester, established a school of learning afterwards, it is credited, transferred to Oxford. The seal of the Priory illustrated, in relation to this note, forms the subject of our premier plate. It was a dual contrivance of silver, executed during the administration of Robert de Hexham, or Hegham, and admitted, as we learn from a chronicle, with some solemnity upon the eve of the Feast of S. Lucia (Dec. 12) A.D. 1241.

The impression which supplies our illustration is a remarkably fine one; it dates from about the middle of the thirteenth century and is

composed of red wax. Speaking of the dedication, the obverse displays below a canopy (composed of a square pinnacled tower, with a spire which reaches the apex of the vesica, and two gables at either extremity also pinnacled and embellished with narrow circular-headed windows and apertures of varied shape) the enthroned figure of the B. Virgin, crowned and apparrelled in an embroidered costume jewelled at the neck. Upon her left knee she supports the Child (cruciformly nimbussed, raising the right Hand in blessing, holding in the left the Gospels) and maintains in her right hand a sceptre, topped with the heraldic form of the lily. The sceptre is surmounted by a vesica-shaped panel, containing the bust of a tonsured canon inclining towards the central figures, duplicated on the corresponding side of the field. The platform upon which the throne rests is supported by a corbel, on which is designed a composite *fleur-de-lis* of great beauty, whilst the field has a lozenge diapering, each vacancy containing a rose or quatrefoil flower. Flowers are emblemtic of love and devotion, and a connection between the canons whose heads appear and these floral ornaments might have been intended. The entire scheme is confined within a beaded bordure, which contains in Lombardic characters the legend.

SIGILL' : ECCLESIE : SANCTE : MARIE : DE : MERITONA :

PLATE I. Seal 2.

The design of the obverse, which follows the earliest type of Abbatial seals, comprises the figure of a Bishop, clad in slightly embroidered vestments as for mass and mitred, holding the right hand in blessing grasping a staff with the left, standing upon a bracket (which exhibits some sculptured work) beneath an architectural canopy. Differing from that of the obverse, the canopy here depicted is of a more minute design. It comprises a representation of what is apparently a cruciform Church (with narrow circular-headed windows and openings), the west end of which rests upon the apex of the arch, whilst the transepts are placed upon the slopes; on either side is a pinnacled tower with spire and windows. The field is diapered in harmony with the chief part and the design is contained within a similar border, which displays in corresponding characters the legend.

✠MVNDI : LVCERNA : NOS AVGUSTINE : GUBERNA.

Upon the rim of a complete impression ran the following inscription :—

AV[GVSTI]NE · PATER · QVOS · INSTRVIS · IN · MERITONA · [HIS · CHR]ISTI · MATER · TVT[RI] X · [EST]ATQV[E · PAT]RONA ·

As this indicates, the episcopal figure was intended for S. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, A.D. 395. From him the Augustinians claimed to have received their rule. In the obverse of the seal here delineated we have

not only the highest example of seal art extant, but in all likelihood the finest ever achieved. This probability rests upon the conviction that it would have been almost an impossibility to surpass it. The design is not elaborate, and in its simplicity may be discerned an element of that grace which artistic fervour and delicacy of execution complete. It is a consummate work of art which would distinguish and grace any epoch. For a fuller appreciation, and an estimate of its value and significance in the history of art reference must be made to our Introduction (p. 3). The qualities of the reverse are by no means uniform with those of the obverse. Nevertheless, both in design and execution, its art is perfect. Modelling, vesting, expression and disposition all claim our admiration as does its beautiful simplicity. As a companion part to the chief it is in every way fitting. Alone it attests that lofty articulation of which the art was capable at the hands of a skilled executant, with a force adequate to maintain it.

At the time of the great Civil War, a large portion of the Priory stood, but the outer walls, nearly entire, with a Norman doorway in them, are about all that now subsist.

MIDDLETON, or Milton, Benedictine Abbey of S. Mary, co. Dorset.

PLATE XL.

Seal 79.

Although not classified with the great English Abbeys, this possessed great wealth and influence. The Church once annexed—a superb minster, architecturally of high degree, stands north of the site. It was contained in the parish of Middleton (a name describing its position in the county) now called (in consequence) Milton-Abbas, and stood westerly upon a rising ground, sheltered by timbered hills, where three vales converged. It was renowned for its saintly relics. It exercised farming operations in the district of Middleton (of which manor the Abbot was lord) upon a gigantic scale. Some idea of their magnitude is derived from a summary of the Abbey live stock in the time of Hen. VI. still available. The house was founded *c.* A.D. 933, in honor of SS. Mary, Michael, Sampson and Branwalader (whose arm it possessed) by K. Athelstan, as an expiative measure for the destruction of his brother Edwin upon a groundless suspicion. K. Athelstan endowed with considerable land, a weir on the Avon, and the water within the shore of Weymouth. Originally tenured by secular canons, after a residence of thirty years they were ejected by K. Edgar, who installed Benedictines in their room. Ed. I. gave the

monks free warren throughout their demesnes. In the ensuing reign a disastrous fire through lightning is recorded, which destroyed the Church with all the muniments and charters. From the nave, it was thereupon handsomely rebuilt. William Middleton, Abbot *temp.* Ed. IV., is mentioned as a great benefactor of the fabric.

The seal of the Abbey reproduced here was of two parts. Although the impression available for illustration is imperfect round the edges and has suffered otherwise, it affords a good idea as to the original design and the capacity of its executant. Obversely, it conveyed an elevation, in part section of the Abbey Church, depicted with central and two side towers, each with a tall spire and two side turrets. Below the central tower and a trefoiled arch occurs a representation of the B. Virgin, crowned and enthroned, with the Divine Infant, nimbussed, sitting upon her left knee, holding an orb in her right hand, and beneath an arch, in either of the side towers, a full-length representation of an Abbot. On each side of the central spire is seen a censing angel; in the foreground an embattled wall, and at the apex, left of the central spire, a cross.

✠ SIGILL' : CONUEN . . . . . AN . . . . . MIDELTONENSIS : E . . . . L'IE.

PLATE XL. SEAL 80. Reversely, the design also comprehends an elevation, in part section, viewed from a different aspect and presenting considerable variance with that of the obverse. Here, in the centre of the façade, are two trefoiled arches which contain the "Annunciation"; in that on the right stands the B. Virgin, in that on the left the Angel Gabriel, the figures being separated by a central shaft. Within a trefoiling, placed in the pediment, a bust is seen, probably designed for K. Athelstan, the founder.

[PORTA : SA]LVTIS : AVE : ℙ : TE : PATET : E[XITVS : A : VE.][VENIT: AB : EVA :] VE : VE : Q : TOLLIS : AVE.

An exemplification which possesses much that is in accord with, and also discloses conditions opposed to, true art. Compared with other instances of its style, it exhibits an inferiority, marked not as much by design as by defective workmanship. This comparative criticism notwithstanding, the seal is endued with considerable merit. In their conception, both schemes were well considered and fertile, whilst their depiction indicates a clever distribution of the elements which constitute their ornament. But in their execution is evident either a power of expression which needed that skill to present them delicately necessary for its completeness, or the same force handicapped by a want of patience and industry—inasmuch as the delineation of the figure of the angel Gabriel, as well as some of the architectural detail of the obverse, appears to indicate a high capacity, probably the latter. There is a lack of devotional ardour apparent and in

this perhaps lies the reason of the defect observed. As regards the obverse, as we have hinted, the architectural features are, generally speaking, well conveyed ; but the drawing of those of the reverse is less meritorious. The figures of the first part are crudely delineated and vested, but those of the second, in both respects (particularly the angel) are much less so. Viewed entirely, both designs secure an indisputable richness of effect, and it will be well to remember that the state of the impression might obscure a greater delicacy of treatment than is now deducible.

The whole of the domestic buildings, except the monks' hall, or refectory, were demolished A.D. 1771, and in their place a mansion, in which the hall is incorporated, now stands. This refectory is a fine structure, blazoned with the posthumous arms of K. Athelstan, with a roof and splendid screen of Irish oak. Upon the latter appears the date A.D. 1494, and the rebus of Abbot Middleton—a mill and a tun.

MILVERTON, Chapel of S. Mary, co. Somerset.

PLATE XLII. Seal 83.

The seal illustrated, from a remarkably fine impression, in correspondence with this note is assigned to the ancient and once royal borough of Milverton with some hesitancy. That it appertained to a Chapel of the B. Virgin at Milverton the legend explicitly states, but of such a sanctuary here there is now neither trace nor record. Neither, as far as we can gather, was any conventual establishment even founded within the parish. The absence, however, of such evidence does not weaken the assignment ; on the contrary, remembering that in the town a considerable woollen trade was done anciently, which implied the existence of people of substance in the district, and, moreover, that the reformers in most instances fulfilled their task of destruction only too well, we may accept the seal as evidence that once such a Chapel actually stood here. The town is beautifully situated amidst woodland scenery upon the western extremity of the vale of Taunton-Dean, and from this description we can assume its delightful surroundings. On the assumption of its existence, in its eternal effacement it is not alone. Countless little sanctuaries which rose up, concluded their hymns abruptly and were swept away without leaving any trace. And here one of the values of seals finds illustration. The design of that under notice comprises a trefoiled arch, upheld by slender pillars and surmounted by a canopy resembling a Church of three towers, under which the B. Virgin, crowned, is enthroned, with the Child Jesus,

cruciformly nimbussed, on her left knee. The hands of both figures are raised in blessing. Below them, an ornamental aperture contains the head of a monk, and on either side of them, outside the niche, a spire topped by a cross rises from the throne.

·.·SIGILL' · CAPELL' · B'E : MARIE · DE : MILVERTON :

A beautiful and intensely devotional instance this, quite a little *Ave Maria*. The design is exquisite but portrayed with a feeling in which religious fervour exceeded the measure of capacity. For it cannot be denied that the features of the B. Virgin exhibit a certain crudity (although those of the Child shew much that is excellent) and the figures some slight disproportion. Both, however, are commendably modelled, well poised if somewhat disproportionate, and gracefully vested. The little face at the base wears an expression distinctly and unpardonably humorous. In effect the seal is highly artistic.

MOTTESFONT, Austin Canons' Priory of the Holy Trinity, co. Southampton.

PLATE XXVII. Seal 53.

A small foundation within the hundred of Thorngate, five miles distant from Stockbridge. "Mottesfont House," a large and venerable mansion, in the erection of which the cellars and part of the cloister were incorporated, now stands upon the site. Intending to make the Church annexed collegiate, Hen. VII. obtained from Pope Alexander a Bull authorising its suppression. Changing his mind the King next decided to bestow it upon a hospital he proposed to erect at Windsor. Again altering his mind he gave it A.D. 1500 to the Abbot of Westminster, where he was raising his superb chapel. But the Abbot never took possession and the Priory continued until the Dissolution. It was founded, probably upon a Saxon foundation, *temp.* Will. II. by Ralph Flambard (then Prior of Christ Church and subsequently the famous Bishop of Durham), Richard de Ripariis, Earl of Devon, and William de Briwere for eleven canons. In the generosity of Eleanor, Queen of Ed. I., it largely participated but its estate was never one of consequence. The seal illustrated (from a fine impression) was not that employed by the house corporately, but by Henry, a Prior. Its design embraces the B. Virgin, with the Child nimbussed sitting upon her left knee, enthroned between two wavy sprigs, above a trefoiled arch which contains a representation of the Prior kneeling to the right in prayer. Upon the front the throne is diapered ; it has finials composed of dragons' heads.

S' FRATRIS · HENRICI · PRIORIS · DE · MOTESFONTE.

A charming little specimen conceived and executed with much taste, delicacy, and feeling. Below the waist the figure of the Virgin is inaccurately drawn, as is that wholly of the Child, but in all other respects the theme is carefully and nicely treated. In effect the seal is rich and artistic.

NEWBURGH, Austin Canons' Abbey of S. Mary, co. York.

PLATE XLI. Seal 81.

A house of the North Riding which, whilst it enjoyed abbatial dignity had actually less pretensions. William de Newburgh, a famous historian, was a member. The Abbey possessed a fair estate which lay chiefly in this county, but was distributed also over the dioceses of Durham and Lincoln. Its site lies in the parish of Coxwold and wapentake of Birdforth, about six miles from Thirske and within "Newburgh Park." In the erection of the manor house standing therein, a portion of the Abbey buildings was incorporated. Founded A.D. 1145 by Roger de Mowbray, who simultaneously endowed it and, later, annexed various Churches. All his donations, his son and grandson, Nigel and William, in turn confirmed. The seal of the house falling within our period and selected for reproduction here was the second employed by it. Somewhat chipped and very indistinct is the impression which has lent itself for illustration. Under a trefoiled canopy (in which are introduced three circular-headed niches, placed triangularly and containing as many heads) the design conveys the enthronement of the B. Virgin, crowned, holding in her right hand a sceptre fleury and supporting upon her left knee the Holy Child, who raises his hand in blessing, between two demi-angels censing which issue from the sides. Below a trefoiled arch in the base the full-length figure of a Prior occurs with two canons on either side of him.

SIGILLVM A . . . . . CTE · MARIE : DE NOVOB . . . .

Although the state of the impression of this seal is such as to obviate a complete or fair appraisement of its art, crudity is here and there discernible with strength sufficient to justify its subordination to many of our series. It strikes us as a weak copy of a fine original. In intention the design would appear to have been good, but a delicate and striking effect, if aimed at, was not secured. The distribution of its ornament is ill-judged, consequently an ill-balanced result is presented. In its execution but moderate skill is evident. It was the work of a mechanic, not an artist.

It is not deficient altogether in merit, however. The grouping and delineation of the figures at the base—which influenced our selection of the seal for reproduction—have much that is artistic in their attempt, if not in their realization.

NEWENHAM, Austin Priory of S. Paul, co. Bedford.

PLATE XXXI. SEAL 61.

A WELL endowed house, of which there are now no architectural vestiges. It stood upon the river Ouse, in the parish of Goldington, about a mile below the county town To this, the genesis of the Priory is traced. Before the Conquest, at Bedford, a secular college was erected for the administration of a Church raised in honour of S. Paul. Will. I. afterwards granted the barony to Paul de Beauchamp who built a strong castle adjoining the town. Some years subsequently the Lady Roaisia, his wife, resolved upon the foundation of the house under notice, and the removal hither of the seculars of S. Paul. She did not effect this herself, but at her instance her son, Simon Beauchamp (who was buried in S. Paul's, the principal Church of Bedford, before the high altar) in the reign of Hen. II. founded this Priory, also in honour of S. Paul, transferred the seculars and introduced the Augustinian rule. K. John made a considerable inroad upon its revenues, but by way of compensation, Hen. III., his son, gave it the Church of Tindene. Its possessions were almost confined to this county. The seal of the Priory was a dual arrangement. As the impression illustrated betokens, the designs of both parts voiced the dedication. Obversely, the scheme comprises an architectural façade of three canopied niches, the central (which has a trefoiled arch) containing the enthronement of S. Paul, with sword and book, and those at the sides various supplicants. Over the canopy appear two demi-angels, and in the side niches a crescent and star respectively.

✠SIGILL' PRIORIS : ET : CONVENTVS :
SCI : PAVLI : DE : NEWĒHAM.

PLATE XXXI. SEAL 62.

THE martyrdom of S. Paul is the theme of the reverse, a subject probably unique in seal art. The scheme comprises an architectural elevation, in part section, of conventional design which contains three niches. In the central, below the name "Paul" and a Divine Hand blessing, are seen S. Paul upon his knees and an executioner about to decapitate him. The sides niches each contain a full-length figure ; that on the left designed for "Lucas" (?),

that on the right for "Titus" (the Roman Emperor who subdued Judœa and destroyed Jerusalem) as the characters which appear above indicate. All three niches have triangular pediments with small trefoiled apertures, the central containing the face of a man with the word "Roma" in the field above.

✠MVCRO : FVROR : SAVLI : FVIT : ENSI[S : PAS]SIO : PAVLI.

To what fineness the execution of this seal was raised the state of the impression is not such as to afford a complete indication, but that it attained at least a commendable degree is manifest. The designs of both parts are good, although that of the first is scarcely as well balanced as the other. Of the central figure of the obverse, the head bears a slightly false ratio to the body, but otherwise it is well delineated and nicely vested. The little supplicants are cramped together, but the angels are drawn with admirable grace and feeling. As regards the architectural features these in both instances are good. And concerning the figures of the reverse there is much in evidence to suggest truthful and studious drawing and posture. In effect, the seal is a fine one. The house was for some time preceding its demolition used as a residence, by Sir Robert Catlin, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, who died in A.D. 1574.

NEWMINSTER, Cistercian Abbey of S. Mary, co. Northumberland.

PLATE XXVIII. SEAL 56.

A ONCE resplendent house, possessed of a magnificent pile of buildings and originally an enormous estate. With other lands, at one time it owned the entire vale of Coquet above Rothbury, but before the Dissolution it was dispossessed largely, and rendered nigh destitute. Its situation was one of marked beauty. It stood upon the river Wansbeck (which, through a diversion created at Mitford, entirely surrounded it) in the parish of Morpeth—anciently "Moorpath," expressive of the primary location of the town, upon a woodland road. The Abbey dated from *c.* A.D. 1137. After the Conquest the barony of Morpeth was granted to William de Merlais, who raised a castle within it. Whilst sojourning at the Cistercian Abbey of Fountains Sir Ranulph de Merlais, his descendant, was so impressed with the virtues of the monks that he resolved to establish a similar house within his domain. Accordingly, he and his wife Julian (daughter of Gospatric, Earl of Northumberland) about the year mentioned founded, half a mile west of the castle, the house under notice, which they endowed and filled with Cistercians from Fountains. Roger, the first Abbot,

was afterwards canonized as "S. Robert of Newminster"; John of Tynemouth was his biographer. Morpeth in Saxon times was a place of no note, but through the castle and Abbey it derived expansion and prosperity. The Abbot, *temp.* Ed. I. was summoned to a Parliament at Carlisle; this sovereign, as well as the two following Edwards, stayed at the Abbey. From thence, with a decaying estate and a gradual diminution of dignity and influence, the house continued until the surrender.

Of the seal of the Abbey, a very fine impression is available for reproduction. The design exhibits a sculptured niche (with pointed arch, surmounted by a canopy pinnacled and crocketted, and masoned buttresses at the sides) containing the enthronement of the crowned Virgin patroness, who hands a ball to the Holy Child sitting upon her left knee. Beneath is a carved arch, (elaborated with tiny trefoilings in the spandrils and inscribed with the opening of the Angelic Salutation—*Ave Maria*) in which the Abbot is depicted at half-length in prayer, with pastoral staff. In the field near the Abbot are a star and crescent, on either side of the niche is a *fleur-de-lis*, and below it a crescent enclosing a star—all symbols of the B. Virgin.

S' CŌE ABBIS : ET · CŌVENTVS : S̄CE : MARIE : DE NOVO : MONASTERIO.

Whilst the devotional fervour of this instance is undeniable, its artistic claims are neither great nor numerous. Its conception is simple, and good (the designer thoroughly grasped the spirit of childhood—the Virgin and Child at play, it is clear, was what was intended) and its execution, save in the most important respect, possesses considerable excellence. Its obvious defect is in the delineation of the figures; the Virgin is not particularly ill-drawn, but the Child is quite in caricature, whilst the facial limning of both is very crude. As regards posture, modelling, and draping the Mother is treated with some aptitude, as is no less the little statuette at the base.

The foundations of the Abbey may yet be completely traced, but all that now remains of the superb edifice is a low Gothic arch, with a fragment of wall adjoining (shaded by a large sycamore) and a piece of the Chapter-house roof.

NORTHAMPTON, Hospital of SS. John the Baptist and Evangelist, co. Northampton.

PLATE L.

SEAL 99.

ONE of the three ancient Hospitals which, with several purely monastic institutions, were founded in the borough. It was erected near the south gate, and as a public charity it continues under altered conditions to this day. In the year A.D. 1137 it was founded by Walter, Archdeacon of Northampton, for poor and infirm persons and placed upon the patronage list of the

prelates of Lincoln. At any time it would not appear to have possessed a very large estate. Perhaps it daily drew upon public generosity for completely fulfilling the founder's object.

The seal of the Hospital, illustrated from an admirable impression, belongs apparently to a very early date within our period. It displays beneath two round-headed arches, divided by a slender shaft and surmounted by a thatched roof and turret, the figures of S. John the Baptist standing on the right and turning to the left, holding in his dexter hand a staff, with his sinister indicating an *Agnus Dei* depicted within a plaque, and S. John the Evangelist standing on the left, towards the right, carrying in his dexter hand a book—his Gospel. In the base a crescent encloses a wavy star of eight points. The legend :—

✠SIGILL̄ · HOSPITAL' · S . . . IOH̄IS BAPTISTE ET · S · · I EWANG · DE · NORHAMT̄.

is exhibited upon a bevelled edge. Although largely condemned, particularly by obvious facial crudities, this quaint and peculiar exemplification is not wholly reprehensible. On the contrary, with its defects it must be admitted to possess considerable character and to exhibit some skilful delineation. There is latent about the figures, which are well disposed and far from badly draped, an undeniable quality of drawing and the effect secured, though greatly marred by the blemishes marked, is neither inartistic nor unpleasing.

The Hospital (a Decorated building) and the Chapel (late Decorated with a Perp. window) annexed still stand and are in the possession of the Roman Catholics. Many of those who fell in the battle of Northampton were buried in the Church-yard attached.

NORWICH, Benedictine Priory of The Holy Trinity, co. Norfolk.

PLATE XXXIII. Seal 65.

A famous, influential, and well-endowed institution—one of twenty monastic establishments which anciently stood in the city—erected simultaneously with the removal of the East Anglian bishopric here, and designed for the ministration of the Cathedral. This building was situated upon the south side of that splendid structure which serves, although a glorious one, almost as the sole monument of this once august house. Founded by Herbert de Lozinga, first Bishop of Norwich. The circumstances which incited its foundation are of peculiar interest and pathos. In A.D. 1071 the episcopal seat of East Anglia was removed to Thetford ; when it became

vacant in A.D. 1091 Herbert, Abbot of the famous Abbey of Ramsey, fastened upon it covetous eyes and ambitious desires. He possessed considerable wealth, and negotiated with Rufus its purchase for himself and the abbacy of Hyde (see Hyde p. 91) for his father. Thus the Abbot of Ramsey sinned. Both simonical preferments occasioned the greatest indignation among the clergy, and consequently much odium was levelled at the Bishop. Heedless at first, gradually he came to recognize the gravity of his offence, and ultimately stricken with remorse for it. He went to Rome, laid the insignia of his office at Urban's feet and confessed his crime. The Pope, affected by the Bishop's repentance and humble submission, pardoned and reinvested him, at the same time enjoining a penance of which the Cathedral and Priory formed part of the issue. On returning to England, with the consent of the Pope, Bishop Herbert transferred his episcopal seat to Norwich. He purchased a site under the great fortress, just then constructed by Rufus and in A.D. 1096 laid the foundations of the Church and domestic offices. In September A.D. 1101 he settled by deed the possessions of both. By that year the Priory had almost reached completion, and in it he placed sixty monks under the priorate of Ingulphus. Thus the Bishop of Norwich atoned, in part, for the sin of the Abbot of Ramsey. He laboured assiduously in advancing the Cathedral but did not live to see it completed. Late in the next century the structure suffered considerably through an accidental fire. John of Oxford, Bishop of Norwich, restored and finished it. The relations which subsisted between the citizens and monks were for long decidedly hostile. This deplorable state of affairs arose from a controversy adverting to the exercise of the liberties embraced in their charter by the citizens within the Priory precincts. Ralph, Abbot of Ramsey, William of York, and Henry de Bathe, with others, A.D. 1239 essayed to adjust these differences and failing to do so, Hen. III. came in person to Norwich to pronounce upon them. The liberties of the Priory anticipated in date those of the city, so a ruling was immediately made in favour of the monks. But notwithstanding, from thence for a long time the annals of both the civic and ecclesiasiastic corporations are tarnished with the records of many fierce and sanguinary conflicts. In one, A.D. 1272, the Priory was burnt, and the Cathedral severely damaged. Several of Ingulphus's successors passed to the episcopate of Norwich.

The seal illustrated here was the second created for the uses of the house. On account of its merits it is more than satisfactory to be able to reproduce a singularly fine impression. A dual contrivance, it dates from A.D. 1258. Obversely, the design exhibits, partly in elevation and partly in section, a building, to a partial extent conventional, doubtless intended for the Cathedral—a Church here depicted with profuse carving

(in which arcades, stringcourses and pediments are liberally introduced) with three towers, each with pinnacles and spires which rise above the roof-line. Under the central tower, within a porch with pointed arch (trefoiled upon the inside), stands Bishop Herbert at full length, his right hand raised in benediction, his left supporting a pastoral staff, with the legend *Herbertus Fundator* inscribed upon a plinth below. An arcade which traverses the structure, level with the centre of the figure, contains within separate sections the heads of six monks. On either side of the central spire, at the apex of the scheme, the figure of a censing Angel is seen descending from Heaven. Upon the dexter side, over a transept, occurs a sun with wavy radiations; upon the sinister, over another, a crescent enclosing a star. The birth place of Herbert de Lozinga is unknown, but probability inclines to Hoxne, Suffolk. When a boy he was sent to Normandy for his education. He became a monk, and in due time Prior of Fécamp Abbey, from whence he was called to the Abbacy of Ramsey. With a final settlement of the prolonged and vexed contention concerning investiture in view, he accompanied Archbishop Ralph d'Escures of Canterbury to Rome. As he was returning he was stricken with a malady to which three years later he succumbed. His body was laid before the high altar and his statue appears over the door of the north transept. A Church at Yarmouth, two others at Norwich, one at Elmham and another at Lynn likewise owe their erection to his splendid expiation.

:✠SIGILLVM : ECCLESIE : SANCTE : TRINITATIS : NORWICI.

PLATE XXXIII. SEAL 66.

REVERSELY, the design sustains another elevation, in part section, of a building also, no doubt, intended for the Cathedral but viewed from a different aspect. It differs very largely from that illustrated upon the obverse, is more lofty and minutely delineated, and apparently possesses the conventional in a larger degree. Here the Church exhibits a roof of three gables, the central with a pediment, and a façade composed of numerous windows, terraces of arches, and other apertures of varying shape. In the centre is a doorway formed by a circular-headed arch with two pointed arches (having trefoiled heads), divided by a central pillar and, above, a double-quatrefoil window. To convey the Annunciation, within the sectioned doorway stand the figures of the B. Virgin and the Angel Gabriel with *Ave Maria* fitly inscribed on the plinth below, and in the window above (separated from the porch by a Gothic arcade) appears the half-length figure of Our Lord with uplifted Hands. Gazing through four apertures, as upon the obverse, here as many monks heads are visible, in line with the architecture between the double-quatrefoil window and the doorway, and

on either side of the central gable, above the roof, two doves, emblematic of the Holy Spirit—the patron.

EST · MICHI : NVMEN : IDEM · TRIBVS · VNI : LAVS : HONOR : IDEM.
ET : BENEDICO : GREGI : FAMVLATVR : QVI : MICHI : REGI.

A third legend, the following, appeared upon complete impressions :—

ANNO : DOMINI : MILLESIMO : DVCENTESIMO : QVINQVAGESIMO : OCTAVO : FACTVM : EST . HOC : SIGILLVM.

Of our series, of our period, indeed of the art as a whole which we are considering, the famous seal here in contemplation constitutes one of the finer gems. Neither in apprehension, design, nor execution has it to yield to any standard of magnificence or beauty except the very superlative. As an object of art, of its own or any order (save architectural instances) within its epoch—as an object of art of its kind in any phase of time—unsurpassed for exquisiteness, it may well be joined with certain other exemplifications here illustrated. It is pregnant with the fervid Gothic spirit which animated its creation ; in itself it summarizes the aspirations of that perception, reflects to a large extent its achievements, and moreover presents both aim and result in abstract and convincing form. Briefly, in it we have illustrated the essence of Gothic feeling, and by it our attention is irresistibly drawn to that sensibility and fascinated by it. Throughout the mind of the artist who bequeathed the seal to us—of the nature of whom the governing ideal of his age formed an inseparable part—loveliness absolutely reigned. The extent of this we can only partially fathom through the visible evidence of his work but from what is invisible, the pervading essence, we can deduce the rest. He was an artist and what, to a few of us at least, is more, a Gothic artist. For seven centuries his praises have been silent, so that we may well sing them now. In conception the designs are grand and singularly ornate. Although they pay some deference to convention, they display a treatment which strived not to escape conventional limitations, but to exploit and develope their possibilities to the uttermost. That in this the artist succeeded we have only to scan the wealth of graceful detail to convince us. As regards capacity for execution, this the designer enjoyed to a high degree, for the seal is magnificently engraved with marked delicacy and skill. Of both schemes the architectural ornament affords the finest feature. In either case it is deeply studied and richly laboured, but, whilst the reverse exhibits the more abundant illustration, it is the obverse which secures the best effect. Upon an examination of this seal we cannot but deplore those changes of time and circumstances which have rendered the use of seals almost

obsolete, since they involved the decline of an art of which it is such a striking example.

Twenty years after the accession of Hen. VIII., the Priorship fell into the evil hands of William Castleton who, foreseeing what was about to pass, secured himself by alienating some of the possessions of the house. In A.D. 1538, Hen. VIII. suppressed the monastery and created a new Chapter, of which the Prior was appointed Dean. At this time the Priory seal, which the Chapter continued to employ, suffered mutilation. The scene of the "Annunciation" was hacked away, and a shield inserted which blazoned or, a cross sa, within a bordure invected—an enhancement of the Priory arms (now those of the Chapter) which were merely ar, a cross sa. In its second state the seal was used for twenty years, when Dean Gardiner removed the representation of Our Lord in the double-quatrefoil window of the reverse, and inserted in its place the letters "E.C.N." (*Ecclesie Cathedralis Norwici*), substituted for the legend another and placed the initials of his surname twice in the field. In its final state the seal continued to be, and is to this day used by the Dean and Chapter.

Hospital of S. Giles.

PLATE XXIX. SEAL 57.

ANOTHER religious foundation of the "City of Churches"—as Norwich, by reason of its sixty sanctuaries, was anciently styled—and one which continues to the present as a public charity. Founded A.D. 1249 by Walter de Suffield, Bishop of Norwich, upon a site he acquired in Holm Street, for the support of poor and enfeebled ecclesiastics of the diocese and thirteen indigent persons, and governed by statutes which he framed. The Bishop endowed it with certain messuages in the city and various Churches, later with another Church, and finally by will with 300 marks, the gilt cup of S. Edmund, and the reversion of a lease of some land with two ploughs thereon. Moved by the prelate's example, several burgesses made it the subject of their generosity. William of Dunwich by his gifts largely assisted the Bishop in the foundation, whilst others made presents of lands and rents. Later, too, considerable gifts were received. About the early part of the fifteenth century it contained a master, deacon, sub-deacon, eight chaplains, seven choristers, four sisters, eight bedridden paupers, thirteen other poor people, four lay brothers and several poverty stricken clerics, travellers and pilgrims. A return made a century afterwards shews that alms were annually distributed, on the feast of the Annunciation, to one hundred and eighty persons, whilst twenty paupers

prayed here daily for the soul of Bishop Goldwell. Our illustration, of the seal of the Master and Brethren, is drawn from a good impression. In design, it exhibits S. Giles nimbussed and seated before a tree with a fawn, wounded by an arrow, leaping up to him, above a circular-headed arch which contains a cross pattée surmounted by a mitre. The legend which associates the fawn with S. Giles (also illustrated previously; see Kypier Hospital p. 96) is recounted in our Introduction (p. 25). Of his patronage of the woodland, the tree speaks, and of the episcopal origin of the Hospital, the mitre.

✠ S' · MAGRI · Z · FRM · HOSPITAL' SCI · EGIDII · DE · NORWIC.

A pictorial example of some beauty, emphasized largely by the charming story conveyed. The conception of the scheme is distinctly pretty, its setting admirable, whilst its execution reveals much delicacy. But the state of the impression disallows an estimate of the complete merits of the seal. That it was essentially artistic is patent.

In the reign of Ed. VI. the Church was made parochial under the title of S. Helen's, and subsequent superiors styled "Chaplains of the parishioners of S. Helen's and of the poor of God's house." Long after it was converted into an almshouse and Chapel, and continues thus. Interesting portions of the original architecture are visible.

OSENEY, Austin Canons' Abbey of S. Mary, co. Oxford.

PLATE XXV. SEAL 49.

A MAGNIFICENT house, founded as a Priory but which soon reached the higher dignity. From the erection of the bishopric of Oxford until the removal of the seat to the city of that name, the Church which adjoined ranked as a Cathedral. The Lady Chapel within it was the end of a pilgrimage; to all who visited, or gave to it Rotherham, Archbishop of York, granted forty days indulgence. The Abbey stood upon the southern border of the county, on an islet formed by the river Isis, and the circumstances which moved its inception were not altogether unromantic. After the Conquest, the baronies of Oxford and Saint Waleries were granted by K. William to one of his Norman partizans, Robert D'Oylly, who erected a castle in the city. This, with the barony, descended to his nephew, Robert D'Oylly, chamberlain of Hen. I. who wedded, at the instance of his sovereign, Edith, a favoured mistress of that monarch. Whilst she resided at her husband's castle Edith, in company with a

gentlewoman, was accustomed to take walks about the grounds. One day she was attracted to a certain spot by the chirping of some birds who, it seemed to her, spoke some message she was unable to interpret. And as often as she visited it did the birds gather there and attempt to make her understand. Wondering, she informed Radulphe, her confessor (a canon of S. Frideswide's Oxford), who counselled that it was clearly desired of her that she should establish, where the birds collected, a religious house. At his wife's request, Robert D'Oylly accordingly, A.D. 1129, founded not a great distance from the castle the institution under notice and endowed it largely. Twenty years after he made further important donations, which included the estate of the collegiate chapel which his uncle had founded within the castle.

The second seal of the Abbey is that here illustrated. A remarkably fine impression enables us to present an admirable reproduction. The scheme conveys a canopied and crocketted niche (with trefoiled arch), with pinnacled buttresses at the sides, under which the B. Virgin, crowned, sits enthroned, with the Holy Child, cruciformly nimbussed, upon one knee, and an orb in her right hand. Below the platform is a Norman arch, arcaded on either side, which contains, in allusion to the neighbouring city, an ox passant guardant. And along the plinth of the niche appears the inscription *De Oxonia.*

SIGILLVM ABBATIS ET CONVENTUS ECCLESIE SANCTE MARIE DE OSENEYA.

A fine and powerful illustration of the art we are contemplating, the merits of which, though the seal lacks that touch of artistic genius which makes for the superlative, are of a very high order. It is the work of an artist no less devout than gifted, a work of simple and chaste conception, delineated with unquestionable capacity in the full glow of religious feeling. In its art, elsewhere as we have noticed more exalted, it is perfect—to mar the scheme not a false or exaggerated line or curve is visible—and the excellent relief in which the scheme is presented yields a rich sculptural effect as pleasing as it was cleverly devised. Extremely lucid and good is the architectural work. And to an extent singular, since the buttresses, in true perspective, are placed some distance behind the façade itself. The figure of the B. Virgin is well modelled and drawn, and no less gracefully postured and draped, whilst her features are not without some expression of tenderness, an emotion much enhanced by the disposition of the figure. As striking as it is beautiful is the result of the whole.

Architecturally, but little remains of this house. An arched window with a small part of the walls summarizes it. Edith was buried upon the north side of the high altar of the Church and on the arch over her tomb the legend of the birds was painted.

OXFORD, Carmelite Friary of S. Mary, co. Oxford.

PLATE XXXVII. SEAL 74.

An important foundation, instituted to partly satisfy the aspirations of the Carmelites to have a seat of learning both at Oxford and Cambridge. Located in the famous Castle of Beaumont, erected by Hen. I. (where Rich. I. was born), on the western side of the city. About fifteen years after the arrival of the order in England, the Provincial obtained from Nicholas Meules (erstwhile Constable of the Castle) a residence in Stockwell Street for a few of its members, and not long after, assisted by the Constable, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, and Ela, Countess of Warwick he raised upon a site which a wealthy citizen (Nicholas Stockwell) gave, a friary and chapel. In this century there lived a Carmelite friar, Robert Baston, who surpassed his contemporaries in poetical power. He was a great favourite with Ed. I., and when the King went to fight the Scots he went with him to chronicle the doughty deeds of his sovereign. By Ed. II. the friar-poet was equally esteemed, and he accompanied him also to the field. After the battle of Stirling, when at the hands of the Scots under Robert Bruce the English suffered defeat, the King stood in considerable danger from his enemies. The friar guaranteed his escape if he recommended himself to the B. Virgin and made her a vow. K. Edward did so, promising on a safe return to England to erect a house for the order to which Robert belonged. The King safely escaped, but the friar was seized by the Scots. Upon his liberation he reminded Edward of his vow, whereupon the King assigned to the Oxford Carmelites the palace of Beaumont whither, about sixty years after their entry into the city, they were transferred. There were other and many benefactors besides Ed. II.

The matrix of the Friary seal being yet extant, we are enabled to reproduce a direct impression. Above an arch, with carved spandrils, which contains an ox passing a ford (in allusion to the city), the design conveys upon the dexter side a full-length representation of Hen. III. curiously clad in a tabard of the royal arms of England, crowned, holding a sceptre in the left hand, and in his right hand a Church which he awards to three friars ; upon the sinister side, another, of the B. Virgin, patroness of the order, crowned, with the Holy Child on her left arm. Over the head of the Virgin is a star, and at her feet a growing lily—both details emblematic of her.

S' COMVNE · FRATRV̄ · ORDĪS · BE̅ · MARIE · DE CARMELO · OXONIE.

An exemplification both quaint and interesting, which tells its story

graphically. The theme is in every sense real, skilfully conceived and, if drawn with only qualified technique, expressed with more than average ability, since with the grouping no fault can be found. As regards the figures themselves, whilst the minor are somewhat crude and stiff that of the Virgin is well drawn and nicely draped, and in that of the King there also lies some artistic virtue. The features of the latter alone are clear and these shew at least accurate portrayal. At the Dissolution several portions of the building were destroyed and the fragments sold. For a while the refectory was preserved and used as a poor-house, but scarcely any vestiges are to be seen now.

PETERBOROUGH, Benedictine Abbey of S. Peter, co. Northampton.

PLATE XXXIX. SEAL 77.

"PETERBOROUGH the proud"—as it was anciently styled. A great and magnificent house, the first raised in central England, and one of the more important of the land. Its estate was vast, its privileges were unique and many. The Abbot, who was mitred, sat in Parliament and took precedence of all others above the Thames. The Abbey stood upon the north side of the river Nen, and its glorious Church (famed throughout Europe, chiefly on account of its superb portico) yet flourishes as the Cathedral of the Diocese. To it the Pope conceded this signal favour, that whosoever vowed a pilgrimage to Rome but was reasonably prevented and visited it would derive the same spiritual advantages. Thus the Abbey became famous; for centuries it was, in a measure, identified with the Chair of S. Peter and regarded as the Rome of England. So great indeed was its sanctity considered, that all who sought admission to the Church (no matter of what degree) cast off their shoes at the gateway, deeming that within veritably holy ground. The unhappy Catherine of Aragon found there a stately tomb, K. Hen. so far regarding her dying request:—

> " . . . When I am dead . . . .
> "Let me be used with honour."

And for this reason, after the rest of the monasteries had fallen Peterborough was for a time reserved. Originally the site of the Abbey and until the time of K. Edgar, was known as Medeshamsted (Meadow homestead), but afterwards named Burch, or Burg and because of the Abbey " Peter-borough." The foundation was commenced by K. Peada *c.* A.D. 650, and completed by his successor Wulphere (who endowed it with over four hundred square miles of land), Ethelred, his younger

brother, and his sisters Kyneburga (Queen of Alfred of Northumbria) and Kyneswitha. The monastery A.D. 870 was totally destroyed by the Danes, and for a century lay in ruins. In the reign of K. Edgar it was restored by Bishop Athelwold of Winchester (in compliance with an instruction received during a vision), assisted by the King and Adulfus, the royal chancellor, upon a scale of great magnificence—the Church in intense beauty—and in it a society of Benedictines was placed. K. Edgar ratified all its original rights, re-endowed it with all its ancient estate and enlarged it by gifts of money and land. The Chancellor having accidentally provoked the death of his son contemplated a pilgrimage to Rome, but was persuaded instead to join in this restoration. Of the new foundation he became Abbot, and afterwards Archbishop of York. The library and revenues were largely augmented by Abbot Kenulfus, and Ælsinus procured for his Abbey a much-prized relic—the right arm of S. Oswald. Abbot Leofricus, who held five other Abbeys concurrently with this, assisted in making it one of the wealthier of houses. At Hastings he fought upon the English side. Hen. VI. granted a fair of six days. From the Conquest to the end the fortunes of the Abbey varied. The illustration given in relation to this note is that of the second corporate seal of the Abbey—a dual example—supplied by an impression which, although fine, would have been rendered of greater value by a little more definition in its detail. Obversely, the scheme of the design comprises, upon a boat (with a figure-head of an animal at either end) delineated length-wise above waves, an arcading of three trefoiled niches, each with a pinnacled and crocketted canopy. In the central niche is a full-length representation of S. Paul, holding erect in his right hand a sword by the point, and in his left a book. In that on the right another, also at full-length, of S. Peter with keys and book, and in that upon the left a third, also at full-length, of S. Andrew with cross and book. Over the canopies, and on the left of the field the initial "R." is thrice introduced, and on the right the letter "F." also. The barque symbolizes the Christian Church. Originally, S. Peter stood alone in the patronage of the Abbey. In A.D. 1237 Cardinal Otho, the Papal Legate, summoned a council in London which decreed that all Churches, however ancient, not consecrated with holy oil should be so sanctified. Accordingly, Peterborough was rededicated to S. Peter and consecrated to SS. Paul and Andrew by the Bishops of Lincoln and Exeter in that year. This circumstance accounts for the occurrence of the three Apostles, and places the date of the seal subsequent to the year A.D. 1237. The initial letter "R.," it may be, stands for Robert de Sutton, who was Abbot from A.D. 1262 to 1274, and upon this assumption it may be assigned to the period of his abbacy. As to the initial "F.", we can offer no explanation.

✠ : SIGNVM : BVRGENSE : CRVCE : CLAVE : FVLGET : ET : ENSE.

PLATE XXXIX. SEAL 78.

REVERSELY, the scheme comprises, in the first place, an architectural façade of a heavier and somewhat varied character. It exhibits a terrace of three niches, each pinnacled, crocketted and with a poppy-head finial, the central, the larger, having an ogee arch. Within the chief, S. Peter, in this instance depicted with a tiara, sits enthroned, holding the keys in his right hand as customarily, and in his left, what is unusual for him, a Latin cross, with his feet resting upon an animal symbolic of the Evil One, near which is the head of a king, doubtless intended for one of the royal founders. In the niche upon the dexter side stands the figure of an Abbot, with staff and book, (either Saxulfus, the first Abbot of the first foundation, or Adulfus, the first of the second), and in that upon the sinister is placed an altar upon which a chalice, covered by a corporale, rests beneath a sanctuary lamp. The sides of the façade are buttressed ; at the top, the arms of the Abbey, two keys in saltire upon a shield, are repeated ; and below the plinth runs a cusping, under which occur several quatrefoils. : TV : PRO : ME : NAVEM : LIQUISTI : SVSCIPE : CLAVEM : One of the more ornate and richer monastic seals of the type evinced by Ely, Glastonbury, and some others but with certain peculiarities and distinctive points of interest. Although of unequal merit, both schemes are admirable. In their conception the Gothic spirit, which finds expression in the wealth of their illustration, is seen in active exercise. Both symbolize and summarize it. The qualities of the obverse are much in excess of those of the reverse both as regards design and delineation. There is a grace of idea and delicacy of execution about the first which the second lacks. The lines of the barque are elegant, the waves realistic and both skilfully drawn, whilst the architecture reveals much care and study. As regards the figures, all three are well described, naturally disposed, and variedly and nicely apparelled but their features are not sufficiently lucid in the impression to warrant a definite opinion concerning the capacity involved in their limning. The effect of the scheme is intensely artistic. In the ogee arch and poppy-head finial of the architecture of the reverse we have unusual features. The disposition of the remaining ornament here leaves nothing to be desired but, as we have hinted, in the execution of the scheme as a whole the refinement exhibited in the obverse is wanting. S. Peter is very well proportioned, but not quite easily disposed. The little Abbot is commendably treated, and the minor ornament laudably presented, and notwithstanding our higher criticism the result, although not so eminent as the first part, is very artistic. As a whole the seal is a superb work of its kind and period.

RAMSEY, Benedictine Abbey of S. Mary, All Virgins, and S. Benedict, co Huntingdon.

PLATE XLV.

SEAL 90.

A MITRED house of great wealth and magnificence, famed for its scholarship (many Abbots and monks having possessed considerable talent and learning) and for its fine library. It stood at the upper end of the town, towards the south, a little distance from the Church, which still continues. Founded A.D. 969, by Ailwine, Alderman of All England and Duke or Earl of the East Angles, at the instance of Oswald, Archbishop of York. Three years later the monks went into occupation; in the fifth, S. Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury and Archbishop Oswald dedicated the Church. The first Abbot, Ædnoth, became Bishop of Dorchester and was slain by the Danes. K. Edgar confirmed the foundation, and Edward the Confessor gave, with others privileges, the right of sanctuary. The Abbot sat in Parliament. Two cells were attached to the Abbey, the estates of which were distributed over many counties. Hen. I. gave a fair; he, Hen. II., Rich. I., and K. John issued to it many charters. In the time of Hen. I. the Church was rebuilt. During the wars of Stephen, Geoffrey de Mandeville expelled the monks and garrisoned the Abbey. In a skirmish before it he was slain by an arrow, alone. Abbot Ailsius (A.D. 1080) is reputed to have originated the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Because the monks refused to appoint the Prior of Fountains Abbot, K. John kept the Abbey in his own hands for seven years, and in A.D. 1285, Ed. III. is said to have obtained forcibly one half of its revenues. Queen Isabella, A.D. 1309, spent nearly three weeks here. The seal selected for illustration, derived from a chipped but otherwise good impression, was that of Abbot Richard, A.D. 1214-1216. He was Abbot of Selby, and was appointed to Ramsey by the procurement of Nicholas, Bishop of Tusculum, Cardinal and Legate. The scheme conveys S. Benedict seated on a throne, holding in his left hand a pastoral staff, and delivering another to a figure, probably intended for Ædnoth, who, bending, is about to receive it. The feet of the chief figure rest upon a crouching fiend.

. . . . . RICARDI : DEI : GRACIA : ABBA[T]IS : SANCTI : BENEDICTI : DE : RAMMES . . . . . .

Had our artist only grappled a little more successfully with questions of anatomical expression and proportion the result of his work under criticism would have deserved a much higher appraisement than, in consequence of his defection in this regard, we are enabled to bestow upon it. In apprehension and design the seal is distinctly good, but as a fine work of art it is marred by a serious inaccuracy visible in the drawing of S. Benedict. It constitutes nevertheless a striking, as well as a remarkable example, the merits of which are as obvious as its defects.

The Church, which is dedicated to S. Thomas á Becket, is a spacious building, chiefly transition Norman to E.E.; the carving, scheme, and variety of the columns and capitals are beautiful. It has a tower, erected from stones of the Abbey. In the adjoining Churchyard are a few remains of the domestic structure, which consist principally of a fine gateway and porter's lodge, with a beautiful turret, a small oriel, and a few buttresses.

SALBURN, Cell or Chapel of S. Michael, co Hertford.

PLATE XLIV. Seal 87.

This little erection stood upon the river Rib, eight miles north-east of Hertford, in the village and ancient market town of Standon. About the time of Hen. I., William, an anchorite, erected a hermitage here which Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford, appears to have extended and endowed and annexed as a Cell to Stoke-by-Clare, Suffolk. How long the monastic character of the institution remained it is impossible to say, but at a very early time the Church of S. Michael, attached to the Cell, became a secular free Chapel, the gift of which was vested in the Earl of March. The seal presented is either that of the Cell or Chapel. Our illustration is derived from a perfect and modern impression taken from the matrix, which, although every vestige of the structure has disappeared, has been preserved. The scheme presents the dedicatory, delineated (as is usual) standing on a dragon (the symbol of heresy, vice and every form of evil), piercing its head with a long cross held obliquely.

✠ S' DOMVS SCI MICAELIS D' SALEBVRNE.

This little instance has no great pretensions towards the artistic. It is weak and suffers upon comparison with other of our lesser examples. However it is far from devoid of merit. Some charm and character it possessses, and in its designer reveals a latent faculty for artistic conception.

SELBORNE, Austin Priory of S. Mary, co Southampton.

PLATE XLIV. Seal 88.

A minor house which stood about four miles and a half south east by south from Alton. Of its buildings there are now no distinct remains. Magdalen College, Oxford, now enjoys the estate it once possessed. Founded A.D. 1233, in honour of the B. Virgin, by Peter des Roches, Bishop of Winchester, whose charter is preserved by the College. The founder, a Poiteven

who had served in France under K. Rich. and been knighted by him, possessed the unenviable distinction of being a favourite of K. John. In the contest between that King and Innocent III., he instigated John to withstand the Pope's excommunication. The end of this controversy is general history. When the fresh struggle arose between John and the barons, the King made his fast friend Bishop Peter his justiciar, in the hope that he would thwart Archbishop Langton; he counselled his sovereign to resist the nation to the last. The Bishop is credited with the introduction into this country of the preaching friars, the greatest theologians of the middle ages, whose teaching first raised Oxford to its grand position. Few facts concerning the foundation under notice are obtainable. It was suppressed by a Bull of Innocent VIII., A.D. 1446, and annexed by Bishop William, also of Winchester, to Magdalen College. A very fine fragment of the Priory seal illustrated, affords a good view of the original. The design comprehended, below a trefoiled arch without supports or elaboration, the "Coronation of the B. Virgin," a theme which, as we have seen, constitutes the subject of the reverse of the seal of Horsham Priory. Above the figures a crescent encloses a star; a radiant sun divides them, and a candle in a candlestick appears on either side.

[SI]GILL' : [CONVENTVS : ECCLIE' : BEATE : MARIE : D' : S]ELEBVR[N'.]

An example treated with a vigour and boldness which largely compensate for the crudity and stiffness visible in its execution. These defects—defects of expression, not conception—are marked, but against them must be set skilful delineation of form and graceful draping. About the seal there is a charm and force of character undeniable, as well as an art though qualified, commendable.

SOUTHWICK, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary, co Southampton.

PLATE XXXVIII. SEAL 75.

A ROYAL house of no great size, which possessed numerous lands and Churches situated in the county. The Church which adjoined was historically celebrated as the scene of the marriage of Hen. VI. with Margaret of Anjou. A short distance from Porchester, the Priory stood on the north side of Portsmouth harbour. In "Southwick Park" the foundations of a few walls are yet discernible, and a Church at Portsmouth still attests the activity of the canons. Hen. I., A.D. 1133, founded the institution within the Church of S. Mary which then existed at Porchester. Not long after it was removed

here and rapidly gained in importance and wealth. William of Wykeham, the famous Bishop of Winchester, founded within it five chantries for the prosperity and soul of Ed. III., for the prelate's own soul, and for those of his father and mother who were buried here. Hen. VI. gave the canons free chase in the royal forest. The seal of the Priory here illustrated is still preserved and affords a second instance (for the first see Boxgrave Priory) of those complicated contrivances referred to in our Introduction (p. 20) as being composed of several pieces. In this instance the matrices are five in number. For us, their preservation is a fortunate circumstance since it allows of our reproducing a perfect impression. Obversely, the design conveys an elevation of a structure (largely conventional, but in all likelihood illustrating some features of the Priory Church) with a central tower and numerous gables, windows and other apertures. In the centre a large part of the façade is sectioned and here beneath a cinquefoil archway the B. Virgin sits enthroned, holding the Divine Infant, cruciformly nimbussed, upon the left knee. To the extent of two sixfoil apertures placed in line with the Virgin's head, and two pointed arches at the base, the façade is further sectioned to allow of the insertion of four heads.

SIGILLVM : ECCLESIE : SANCTE : MARIE : DE : SVWIKA.

PLATE XXXVIII. Seal 76.

Reversely, the design comprehends another elevation of similar character but varied detail to that described. Here in the centre the façade has two sections one above the other. The first, which has eight cusps, contain a half-length representation of Our Lord, nimbussed, raising the right hand in benediction, and grasping with the left an orb topped with a cross. This is divided by a terrace of pointed arches from the second, which comprises under a circular archway two trefoiled arches, supported by slender colums, in which are respectively placed full-length representations of the B. Virgin and the Angel Gabriel in illustration of the "Annunciation." Within a pointed arch the head of a canon occurs on either side; over the roof a crescent with star and a wavy sun are described.

SIT : PRO : SVWIKA : MEDIATRIX : VIRGO : PVDICA : ET : PAX : ANGELICA : SIT : NOBIS : SEMPER : AMICA :

Not unmixed with astonishment is the warm admiration this superb instance readily evokes. Few Gothic creations, outside seals and architecture, have descended to us more exquisite or magnificent. In it we have the lively animation and prepossession of the Gothic spirit—that spirit which alone could yield an instance of this kind so beautiful—which united the devotional and artistic, and the decline of which, if it did not influence, was not long after followed by their divorce. Of the religious fervour in which the objects illustrated in this work were usually

conceived much has already been said, and it suffices to note that in the apprehension of this example that ardour was not suffered to relax. The designs themselves exhibit little or no originality; it is the spirit, skill, and delicacy in which they are presented that strike us with the larger force. Richly worked, minutely detailed, carefully studied and exquisitely balanced, the architectural façades of both parts are presented with the accuracy of a skilful architect's pen and eye. The delineation of the figures attains a high but not a superlative standard. Upon the obverse, although the head of the Virgin is a little disproportionate, the figure is well modelled and disposed and draped with considerable grace, whilst that of the Child from those aspects merits equal praise. The figures of the reverse are more minute, and their depiction therefore offered graver difficulties, nevertheless, it is only the most acute study which succeeds in detecting in them any defects—and these of a purely technical description. The seal was a consummate effort of an artist of unquestionable capacity, patience and skill. Of its order, and any epoch, it is one of the more ingenious, striking and beautiful—a magnificent and intricate work of art.

TAUNTON, Austin Canons' Priory of SS. Peter and Paul, co. Somerset.

PLATE XLII.

SEAL 84.

NEITHER a very large nor important foundation which stood, above the river Tone, on the eastern side of the county-town of West Somerset. Taunton is located upon a rising ground in a central part of the vale of Taunton Dean. Hence the situation of the Priory was singularly beautiful. Founded *temp.* Hen. I. by William Gifford (a relation and one of the chaplains of the Conqueror), Bishop of Winchester, whose appointment to the See was the first act of Hen. I. as King-elect. Bishop Henry of Blois enlarged the foundation, the patronage of which for a long time continued with the prelates of Winchester. To the founder was due the original establishment in England, at Waverley, of the Cistercians. Numerous persons assisted in enlarging the estate of the Priory, to which Hen. VIII. annexed Staverdale Priory. A defective but lucid impression has to suffice us for an illustration of the relative seal. The design, which conveys the dual dedication, comprises, against a field diapered lozengy and ascending from an arcaded platform, two pointed and trefoiled arches (each pinnacled and crocketted), upheld by three slender shafts, that on the dexter containing at full-length S. Peter, who holds in his right hand a Church and in his left two keys; that on the sinister, S. Paul with sword.

✣ S' ✣ C̄ORV̄ ✣ APOSTOLOR ✣ PETRI ✣ ET ✣ PAVLI ✣
[T]ANTONIĒSIS · E . . . . . .

A pleasing example, no less rich than effective, which exhibits much that is excellent. The design is as well considered as it is nicely balanced, whilst the skill shewn in delineation reaches a high order. Without qualification the seal may be defined as highly artistic. All that remains of the Priory is a barn, which exhibits some windows of Early Decorated character. It is situated near the north side of S. James Street.

TORR, Premonstratensian Abbey of S. Saviour, Holy Trinity, and S. Mary, co. Devon.

PLATE XXVIII. Seal 55.

A GREAT and noted house—the wealthiest of all our Norbertine establishments. Its situation—upon a rock or tor (from which it derived its name) of the northern shore of Torbay, surrounded by some of the finest scenery in the country—was in point of charm unsurpassed. For centuries its magnificent and solid fabric was the most conspicuous object in the bay. Founded by William, Lord Briwere, A.D. 1196, who well endowed and installed within it canons from Welbeck. Through the generosity of various persons its estate and privileges were enlarged. Peter Fitzmatthew gave it the valuable Abbey of Blackaveton; William the son of the founder, Ilsham which he acquired from the Pomeroy's; the family of Fitzstephen, considerable property in the ancient borough of Dartmouth, and William de Cantilupo, lord of Totnes, freedom from toll in his borough.

The *ad causas* seal of the Abbey forms the subject of our corresponding illustration. It is derived from an impression which is woefully imperfect and indistinct. We select it for reproduction on account of the comparative rarity in seal art of its chief theme which suggests that mediævalists preferred to contemplate the birth rather than the sufferings of the Redeemer. Defective as is the impression available it nevertheless enables us to determine the lineaments of the original. The design is in two sections. In the upper, as relating to the principal dedicatory, occurs the Crucifixion between the Virgin and S. John, with an inscription upon an entablature and a star and crescent above. The second section forms a quadrilobe (arcaded on either side), which contains a half-length representation of the B. Virgin with the Holy Infant, between another crescent and star, above the minute figure of a mitred Abbot, drawn at half-length in prayer, and placed below an arch.

SIGILL' · ABBATIS · ET · C . . . . . DE · TORE AD CAVSAS.

Comment upon this instance is restricted to the design which is artistic and well poised. There is much also that hints at skilful drawing.

Upon the site of the Abbey a mansion has been erected, but considerable remains continue, consisting chiefly of a gatehouse, the Chapter-house which is roofless, prostrate masses of the central tower of the Church, refectory (now a Chapel) and a stately grange.

WALEDEN (or Saffron Walden), Benedictine Abbey of S. James, co. Essex.

PLATE XLIII. SEAL 86.

"S. JAMES OF WALEDEN"—a richly endowed and privileged establishment, founded (originally as a Priory) in honour of God, S. Mary, and S. James. The town in which it stood is located upon a narrow tongue of land encompassed with a valley; the Abbey was erected, at the confluence of two streams where four roads converged in order that its hospitality might be easily availed of by the pilgrim and the poor. Founded A.D. 1136 by Geoffrey de Mandeville (grandson of Geoffrey de Mandeville, a Norman chief and a distinguished partizan of the Conqueror), the first Earl of Essex of that family who gave it a considerable estate. The Churchyard was consecrated in the year named, by Robert of London, Nigel of Ely, and William of Norwich. There were several benefactors chiefly drawn from the founder's family. At first, Geoffrey de Mandeville, son of the founder, shewed the house scant favour but afterwards confirmed all its possessions except a piece of glebe. William de Mandeville upon succeeding to the Earldom was also antagonistic, but after a journey to the Holy Land became very generous to the monks. King Stephen gave an annual fair on the Eve and Feast of S. James, and Ed. I. a weekly market. In A.D. 1237 the Church was either rebuilt or substantially repaired. Joan, wife of the tenth Earl of Essex, adorned it with sculpture, covered the roof with lead, rebuilt the steeple, and gave costly vestments and ornaments, including a gold cross containing relics of the True Cross. An impression, slightly injured by pressure but otherwise fine, enables us to well convey the Abbey seal. The design exhibits S. James the Great, nimbussed, standing upon a mount, holding in his right hand a book, in his left a long cross or crozier, with three escallops in the field.

✠ SIGILLVM : ECCLESIE : SANCTI : IACOBI : DE : WALEDENA.

This charming seal appeals strongly to us on account of the entire absence of convention and the quite natural and agreeable manner in which

the figure is delineated. It constitutes, besides, a chaste and artistic instance. From whatever point we elect to criticize it, it satisfactorily responds. Whilst lacking the vigour exhibited in the drawing of the figure upon the other seal illustrated on this plate, this is treated with considerable boldness and is well modelled and vested.

Upon the site of the Abbey, and partly out of its ruins, Thomas, Earl of Suffolk, Lord High Treasurer *temp.* James I., erected a magnificent fabric—the famous Audley End. It has been largely destroyed, one court only (a fine example of Jacobean architecture) now remaining which of itself forms a superb residence.

WALTHAM, Austin Canons' Abbey of The Holy Cross, co. Essex.

PLATE XXXV. SEAL 69. A STATELY foundation of great historical interest and repute for learning and sanctity—the latter consequent upon the possession of a miraculous Crucifix—in which the town of Waltham-Abbey or-Holy Cross originated. It possessed enormous wealth, high privileges, and a sumptuous fabric, whilst the Abbot, who was mitred, was summoned to Parliament. The Abbey was erected upon what was originally the great wold of the county. It stood upon the river Lee, and was not destroyed until A.D. 1770. Some ruinous walls, a low bridge of three spans over the river, and a fine pointed gateway are all that now subsist. In the days of Cnut, the locality affording facilities for the chase, his standard bearer, Tovi, a proud and powerful Danish thegn (at whose nuptials Harthacnut died whilst drinking) erected here a hunting seat. On the top of a peaked hill (Montacute) Tovi one day discovered the Crucifix alluded to. He brought it here, erected a Church for its reception and placed it under the ministry of a few seculars. The town was conferred by the Confessor upon Harold (Earl Godwin's son), who, having been completely cured of palsy through this Crucifix, rebuilt as a thanksgiving the Church upon lines greater and more splendid, endowed it with seventeen manors, made it precious gifts and increased the seculars to twelve, under the government of a Dean. The cry of the English, "Holy Cross!" at the battle of Stamford Bridge and on the field of Senlac referred, it has been suggested, to the famous Crucifix of Waltham. After the first, Harold made a visit to it, offered further gifts and there made vows. Of the many legends current regarding it, one relates that as the King lay prostrate before it the head of Christ inclined towards him. Another, that

it warned two of the canons to follow the English towards Hastings and witness the battle. After that decisive encounter the corpse of Harold was brought to the Abbey and here interred. Although deprived of their moveable wealth, the landed estate of the canons (as regards the chief portion) was left undisturbed at the Conquest. They continued in possession until A.D. 1117 when Hen. II., having vowed to establish an Abbey in honour of S. Thomas of Canterbury, ejected them and in that year installed regular canons in their stead. Henry assured to the Abbey all the gifts made by K. Harold and other benefactors, and bestowed two rich manors upon it besides. Rich. I. and other donors largely increased its estate in subsequent times. To the Abbey Hen. III. was a frequent visitor; when the news of Wat Tyler's rebellion reached him, Rich. II. was in residence near by and here the body of Ed. I. on its journey to Westminster lay in state for fifteen weeks. The first seal of the Abbey, in its original state, is selected for illustration here our plate being derived from casts of a remarkably fine impression in the Chapter House. It is composed of two pieces, the design of the premier comprising upon a circular field a vesica, bordered with open tracery and foliage with a cross within a circular panel on either side, which contains the "Cross of Waltham" upon a mount (allusive of the hill where it was discovered) upheld by two angels, nimbussed, with expanded wings, who have just descended with it. It thus commemorates the circumstance which incited the original foundation and dedication.

✠ HOC · EST · SIGILL' · ECCLESIE · SANCTE · CRVCIS · DE · WALTHAAM.

PLATE XXXV. Seal 70.

The design of the reverse also presents upon a circular field a vesica shape, here placed between two shields supported by lions passant guardant, that on the left displaying, in reference to Hen. II.'s connection, the arms of England, that on the right, on a cross engrailed five crosses crosslet fitchées, the arms borne, in obvious allusion, by the Abbey. In this instance the vesica is occupied by three antique intaglio gems, as follows:—(1) in the centre, a circular stone which displays two busts of Byzantine style, with covered heads, facing each other, intended for the two founders, Tovi and Harold; (2) at the top, a smaller gem exhibiting a man and dolphin (non-allusive), and (3) at the base, an oval stone displaying a tiger passant to the right.

✠ HOC : CARTE : FEDVS : CVM : TOVI : FIRMAT : HAROLD.

A striking and important seal. Its design is unique, its nature singular. Not a trace of conventionalism is discernible in its apprehension and it stands boldly out from the rest of our series by reason of the marked originality it evinces. Its singularity lies in the insertion of the three antiques in the

reverse, a practice that was occasional but not frequent. Among our examples, on account of its beauty and clever disposition, it occupies a high place. The scheme of the obverse is telling and communicative ; its effect one of considerable charm—the theme of the Angels depositing and fixing their sacred burden is portrayed with a feeling and truth equal to the poetry of the idea. But it is the reverse which perhaps is the most commendable, not on account of the nature of its ornament but for the perfect harmony of its arrangement. The armorial detail is most skilfully and happily treated and disposed. As to the capacity of the artist for execution there can be no question ; the seal reveals an extraordinary talent in this direction and, as well, constitutes a valuable and interesting creation of its period.

A splendid cruciform Church, with a lofty central tower, was once attached to the Abbey. The nave is now used as the parish Church and the Lady Chapel as a schoolroom.

WENLOCK, Cluniac Priory of S. Milburga, co. Salop.

PLATE XXIV.

SEAL 47.

A FAMOUS house and one of the more important of its class in the country, with the architectural beauties of which but few could compare, the site of which is to-day marked by an extensive pile of exquisite ruins illustrating every species of late Norman and the succeeding styles. It stood close to the parish Church, on the south side of the town. Originally established by S. Milburga, the first Abbess, daughter of K. Merwald and niece of K. Wulphere of Mercia, *circa*. A.D. 680. Destroyed by the Danes and restored, *temp*. Confessor, by Leofric, Earl of Mercia and his brave and generous lady, Godiva, of Coventry fame. Thirty years later it was abandoned and fell into decay. The site was granted by the Conqueror to Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Arundel, Chichester and Shrewsbury who *circa*. A.D. 1080, rebuilt or restored it, endowed it largely and annexed it to Cluny. Upon her death, the remains of S. Milburga were interred within the Church which, originally dedicated to the Holy Trinity, became known as S. Milburga's. When Roger de Montgomery was rebuilding it, a boy trod upon the hidden spot of her burial place, whereupon it gave forth delicious odours which miraculously cured persons suffering from king's evil. Many thus afflicted flocked hither, and from the translation of her remains into the new sanctuary the wealth and consequence attained by the Priory dates. In common with other alien houses it suffered during the

wars with France. It was seized by the crown, *temp.* Ed. III., and decreed "Prioratus indigena" *temp.* Rich. II.

A good impression furnishes our illustration which is of the *ad causas* seal. The design conveys under a trefoiled arch, supported by slender pillars and surmounted by a Church-like structure, S. Michael the Archangel (with no apparent connection) with expanded wings, piercing with a long lance held in the right hand the head of a dragon who lies at his feet and carrying in his left a circular shield.

S' ECCL'IE : CONUENTUALIS : DE WENLOK : AD CAVSAS · TANTUM.

A simple and pleasing instance this, the artistic merits of which in design as well as in execution are excellent. The figure is nicely drawn and perfectly poised, with its activity well expressed.

The south transept of the Priory Church and two of the cloisters are still in a perfect state. The end and side walls of the first (which include triforium and clerestory) with the wall of the north transept also continue with other important remains.

WESTACRE, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary and All Saints, co. Norfolk.

PLATE XXV. SEAL 50.

A FOUNDATION of some consequence (originally occupied by Black Canons) which stood on a bank of the river Nar. In addition to the patronage of various Churches, it possessed numerous lands in the county and cells at Narford, Massingham Magna, and Woburn. To Oliver the priest or rector of Westacre (the first Prior) and Walter, his son, it owed its inception, *temp.* Rufus, and to Ralph de Tony, lord of the manor (who promoted it for the sake of his soul and for those of his wife, sons and ancestors), its erection. The latter granted the priest by way of endowment, the manor and parish Church. Afterwards the Priory became the recipient of numerous gifts, those of Guy, Beauchamp and Tarquin, Earls of Warwick, being the most substantial. An annual fair upon the feast of the Translation of S. Thomas of Canterbury was granted by Ed. IV. During the reign of Ed. I. both Priory and Church were destroyed by fire. A perfect impression enables us to afford a complete illustration of the second seal of the Priory. The design exhibits an architectural scheme which comprises a tall niche of three pointed and trefoiled arches, with a Church-like canopy at the top, supported by pinnacled shafts, with a trefoiled, pointed and pinnacled wing supported on a bracket upon either side.

The niche is divided into two sections, the upper containing, within a vesica, a representation of the Holy Trinity known as the Italian Trinity—God the Father seated and supporting in His outstretched arms Christ crucified—between the symbols of the four Evangelists. The second section exhibits under a circular arch, trefoiled upon the inner and arcaded upon the outer sides, the B. Virgin, crowned and seated with her feet resting upon a wyvern, playing at ball with the Infant Jesus, who holds (unusually) a *fleur-de-lis* in his left hand and stands upon the seat. In the dexter wing stands Ralph de Tony, represented as an accoutred knight, and in the sinister Oliver the priest.

S' CAPITVLI · ECCL' · B̄E · MARIE · ET · OMNIVM · S̄COR̄ · DE · WESTACRA.

A remarkable and beautiful seal of great interest and besides, artistically and otherwise, a valuable memorial. The wealth of detail—each element of which is pregnant with story—the design possesses is ordered in perfect symmetry and executed with high skill. The Infant is inaccurately, but the Virgin truthfully delineated and posed; the theme—the Mother amusing the Child—one of singular charm, is presented with the fullest effect. Alone, the seal distinguishes the craft it represents as an important and expressive art.

The Priory Church was a large structure; what now remains of it is a part of the tower, and of the domestic buildings principally a gatehouse.

WESTMINSTER, Benedictine Abbey of S. Peter, co. Middlesex.

PLATE XXXII. SEAL 63.

A MAGNIFICENT house which ranked in the forefront of the greatest monastic centres of the land. In its historic associations, renown, sanctity, affluence, and importance together it stood unrivalled. It was erected upon an uncultivated spot, overgrown with thorns and surrounded by water, called in Saxon times "Thorney Island." After the erection of the Church here, to distinguish it from S. Paul's, it became designated the "Minster of the West," or Westminster. The traditions of the Abbey are preserved in, and its site indicated by the once adjoining Church, than which no edifice in the world, save S. Peter's, Rome, is more illustrious. It constitutes one of the nation's glories. No kindred fabric contributes so abundantly to England's annals; in it the nation's history is embodied. From Harold to Victoria within its walls the heads of our sovereigns with few exceptions have been endued with the sacred gold; to some the Church

not only gave crowns but "doth their ashes keep." The genesis of the Abbey is involved in obscurity; until the time of the Confessor no account concerning it can be accounted absolutely historical. The former circumstance has occasioned much speculation, and opinion is divided as to whether it originated with the apostolic or pontifical conversion of England. Of the beliefs credited in the Middle Ages, one of the strongest was that S. Peter, after the Ascension, visited this island in person and erected upon it a Chapel from which the Abbey issued. An unknown chronicler gives the year A.D. 184 as the date of foundation, and in the histories of John Flete, a Prior of Westminster, and Richard Sporley, who entered it as a monk, his evidence is adduced in support of the contention. Whilst a British origin is ambiguous, there can be no doubt that at a very early period of the Heptarchy the lines of the Abbey were laid. The Saxon foundation is variously ascribed to a London citizen, Sebbertus, and his wife; Mellitus, Bishop of London (the companion of S. Augustine); Sebert of the East Saxons and Offa of Mercia, but with the greatest show of reason to the East Saxon King. Having been baptized by Bishop Mellitus he is said to have erected the Church here in honour of S. Peter, out of which the Abbey is conjectured to have grown. There is extant a beautiful legend, too lengthy to admit of insertion here, concerning its dedication by S. Peter himself. During the following centuries Sebert's foundation endured many vicissitudes. At the hands of the Danes it sustained frequent injury. Through the instrumentality of S. Dunstan (who introduced the Benedictine rule) K. Edgar restored it and added to its property. It was towards the eleventh century that the Abbey escaped from its comparative obscurity and began to acquire that renown which grew to distinguish it. The Confessor showered upon it immense and continuous favours. He assured all its possessions, largely augmented them and rebuilt the Church in a fashion so magnificent as to decimate his estate. He increased the number of the clergy, exempted the house from episcopal control and obtained of the Pope a rescript which qualified the Church for English coronations. The splendid favour shewn this foundation by K. Edward was in the fulfilment, or rather compromise of a vow he had made to make the pilgrimage to Rome, from which for political reasons he was dissuaded. The Conqueror laid upon the altars rich gifts, and subsequently increased its estate which, during the wars of K. Stephen and Maud was largely seized and made desolate. It was restored, however, for the most part *temp.* Hen. II. For the use of mitre, ring, and gloves the Abbot Laurentius procured the Pope's consent A.D. 1160, and during the rule of Humez (A.D. 1214) the long dispute between the Bishops of London and the Abbots regarding jurisdiction was settled by arbitration. Equally with the Confessor was

Hen. III., who rebuilt the Church, liberal to the Abbey; rich and many were the gifts and privileges which he conferred upon it. A remarkably fine impression enables us to reproduce successfully the second seal of the Abbey. It is of two parts, and proffers an example of early work within our period. Obversely, the design exhibits the patron, S. Peter, with engrailed nimbus, wearing a mitre, pall and vestments (partly embroidered and with interlaced ring-work) seated upon a carved throne, his feet resting upon the mysterious figure of a king (lying at full-length), holding in his right hand a crozier, in his left two keys.

✠DIMIDIA : PARS : SIGILL' : ECCLESIE : SANCTI : PETRI : WESTMONASTERII.

PLATE XXXII. Seal 64.

Reversely, the scheme exhibits Edward the Confessor, clad in embroidered robes, seated upon a carved throne, with his feet also resting upon a regal figure in the same humiliating and painful position as that upon the obverse, holding in his right hand a sceptre fleury, in his left a model of the Abbey Church in allusion to his association with it. On the left of the field is a large rose between three pierced roses of lesser size, with other small detail; on the right, some other flower between the same number of pierced roses, with some minor embellishment also.

✠DIMIDIA : PARS : SIGILL' : ECCLESIE : SANCTI : PETRI : WESTMONASTERII.

A fine seal, of chaste and simple design, chiefly remarkable for the vigour of treatment which it displays. Both figures are capably drawn and disposed, but it is that of S. Peter which exhibits the most skilful limning and the easiest disposition. The capacity of the engraver was indisputably great, and his faculty for expression no less.

WIGMORE, Austin Canons' Abbey of SS. James and Victor, co. Hereford.

PLATE XXXVI. Seal 72.

An extensive and important house, which reached the Dissolution divested of a large part of its original estate, of which but few remains are extant. It stood, upon an elevated site, about a mile from the parish, in the direction of Shrewsbury, and the same distance from Wigmore Castle (now an ivy-clad ruin) in which it originated. Ranulph de Mortimer, who accompanied Duke William to England, having taken the castle from Edric, Earl of Shrewsbury, rebuilt it for his own occupation and founded in the parish Church a college of three prebendaries. When dying he laid

injunctions upon his son and heir, Sir Hugh de Mortimer, to erect in its place an Abbey and accordingly, at the instance of Sir Hugh, his steward, Sir Oliver de Merlimound, raised and endowed on a small scale a house at Scobedon, or Shobedon, in which a Prior and two canons from S. Victor's, Paris, were installed. Through scarcity of water and other inconveniences the canons changed the site to Eye; from thence to Wigmore, thence to Beodune, thence again to Shobdene, and finally to this place again where, A.D. 1179, Sir Hugh founded a noble Abbey for their reception which he liberally endowed. The seal of the house reproduced exhibits a façade of three canopied niches, the central, which is of larger proportions than the rest, containing a full-length representation of S. George, accoutred, with sword and shield; the sinister, another, of S. James the Apostle (chief patron) and the dexter a third, of S. Victor, who was also esteemed a patron by reason of his being the dedicatory of the French house from which the canons were originally drawn. Below the screen appears an arcade of three arches, upheld by two slender pillars, the chief containing the kneeling figure of an Abbot.

. . . . ONASTERII · SANCTOR · IACOBI · ET · VICTORIS · DE · WIG . . . . . .

The unsatisfactory state of the impression available for illustration debars us from a complete estimate of the qualities of the seal under notice. There is evidence, however, sufficient to justify our esteeming it a good one. The richness in which the scheme was conceived is apparent, and that it was well balanced is also clear. Close study renders abortive any attempt at realizing the artist's actual skill in figure delineation and expression, but a superficial view suggests, if it does not reveal, able drawing. The Abbey and Church (which contained the tombs of five Earls of March) were destroyed at the Dissolution.

WROXTON, Austin Canons' Priory of S. Mary, co. Oxford.

PLATE XXXVI. SEAL 71.

A SMALL establishment, erected about three miles distant from Banbury, the site of which is now occupied by a mansion—"Wroxton Abbey"—in the erection of which some of its arches and other portions were incorporated. Founded in the reign of Hen. III. by Michael Belet, who endowed with the lordship of Wroxton and Balscote, and afterwards extended. Hen. III. confirmed the possessions and privileges of the canons, and Baldwin Pigot granted them the Church at Ounsby. The design of the seal illustrated

comprises three sections; the first contains within a niche, having a trefoiled arch, the enthronement of the B. Virgin and Child; the second, the Prior seated and holding a Book between six canons who stand, three on either side, under a cusped arch; and the third, also under a cusped arch, the three-quarter figure of the founder raising his dexter hand and holding helmet and shield in the sinister.

SIGILL' PRIORIS ET CONVENT[VS] LOCI SCE MARIE DE WROCSTA.

Although the impression reproduced in reference to this description lacks sharpness of outline, and thereby precludes a full appreciation of the virtues of the original seal, it is adequately lucid to convince us that it was the effort of a clever artist. The design exhibits a certain and commendable departure from conventional lines. Whilst ample, it is not overcrowded, in fact its ornament received a careful distribution which in the central section realized an effective grouping. Evidence of an aptitude for execution commensurate with the fertility present in apprehension and plan would place the seal highly amongst works of its order. Except such parts as are incorporated in the mansion referred to, nothing now remains of the ancient Priory.

YORK, Hospital of S. Leonard, co. York.

PLATE XXX. Seal 60.

One of the wealthier and more extensive hospices of the north, in which a Master, thirteen brethren, four seculars, eight sisters, thirty choristers, two school-masters, two hundred and six beadsmen, and six servitors were supported. It stood upon the left bank of the Ouse, upon a site now embraced by the gardens of the Yorkshire Philosophical Society. Founded A.D. 936 by K. Athelstan, who destroyed the castle here and made York the seat of the Earls of Northumbria. In the reign of the Conqueror the Hospital was removed by the canons of the Cathedral to a site near the west end of that fabric, and by Rufus (who so enlarged its possessions and buildings as to be esteemed the founder) it was again transferred, to another part of the city. During the reign of Stephen the house was destroyed by fire, whereupon the King rebuilt and dedicated it to S. Leonard. Hen. II. confirmed its privileges, and K. John granted timber for building purposes and fuel, with grass and pasture through the entire forest of the shire. Walter Langton, appointed Master in A.D. 1294, framed the statutes under which the Hospital was thence governed. The seal reproduced in relation

to this note, from an impression lacking somewhat definity of outline but otherwise good, is that which appertained to the Exchequer. Against a field diapered lozengy the design comprises, beneath a pointed and trefoiled arch supported by pinnacled and crocketted shafts, a full-length statuette of S. Leonard, ecclesiastically vested, holding a staff in one hand and a book in the other. Outside the niche, upon the dexter side is a shield displaying the armorials of England and below, in an archway, the half-length figure of a monk in prayer.

S' OFFICII · SCACCAR' · HOSP' SCI LEONARD' EBOR'.

A little example which secures considerable richness of effect. The insertion of a shield upon one side of the field only, renders it somewhat rare. Both the scheme and the manner in which it is presented are decidedly good.

What now remains of this important Hospital is principally the entrance passage, ambulatory (or cloister), and a handsome E.E. Chapel.

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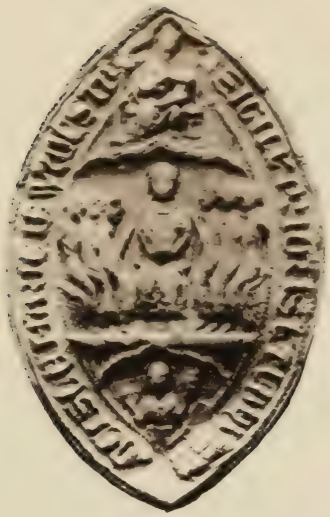

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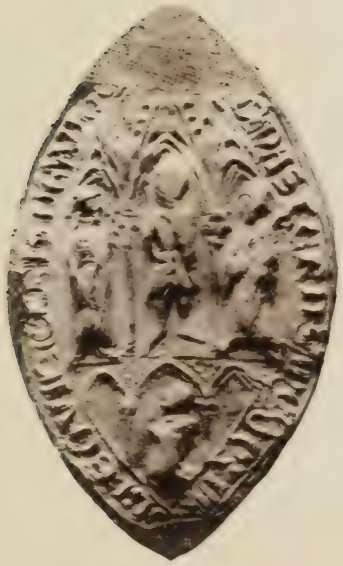

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